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## ACCEPTANCE

This dissertation, TITLE I ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS' PERSPECTIVES ON TEACHER PREPAREDNESS: UNIVERSITY-BASED ALTERNATIVE TEACHER PREPARATION FOR URBAN SCHOOLS, by PAMELA L. GAYLES, was prepared under the direction of the candidate's Dissertation Advisory Committee. It is accepted by the committee members in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy in the College of Education, Georgia State University.

The Dissertation Advisory Committee and the student's Department Chair, as representatives of the faculty, certify that this dissertation has met all standards of excellence and scholarship as determined by the faculty. The Dean of the College of Education concurs.

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## ABSTRACT

### TITLE I ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS' PERSPECTIVES ON TEACHER PREPAREDNESS: UNIVERSITY-BASED ALTERNATIVE TEACHER PREPARATION FOR URBAN SCHOOLS

by  
Pamela L. Gayles

Colleges of education produce the majority of teacher educators in the United States. Additionally, over half of the alternative teacher preparation programs in the United States are administered by colleges of education. However, the literature reveals that few institutions concentrate on urban teacher preparation and that teacher-reform efforts have continuously insisted on high-quality teachers for high-need urban schools. This work addresses the existing gap in the extant research on urban schools by including the voices of school principals that are often unsolicited when discussing teacher preparation reform, particularly reform efforts responding to the staffing needs of Title I urban schools.

This study explores the perceptions that Title I principals have of urban teaching, urban school challenges, and, most importantly, of urban teacher preparation. Individual interviews were conducted with four Title I urban elementary school principals from public schools in the Southeast. Additionally, an analysis of documents was conducted from five university-based urban alternative teacher preparation programs.

Results from this research reveal that Title I school principals are aware of their staffing needs and challenges and are equally attuned to what they consider to be critical aspects of teacher preparation for Title I urban schools. This dissertation also highlights efforts underway in colleges and universities across the United States that are utilizing urban alternative teacher preparation to address staffing needs in urban schools. These efforts challenge the negative accusations about and allegations against both college of education and alternative teacher preparation programs' inability to produce well-prepared teachers for all children, especially disadvantaged youth.



TITLE I ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS' PERSPECTIVES ON  
TEACHER PREPAREDNESS: UNIVERSITY-BASED  
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by  
Pamela L. Gayles

A Dissertation

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Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy  
in  
Educational Leadership  
in  
the Department of Educational Policy Studies  
in  
the College of Education  
Georgia State University

Atlanta, GA  
2011

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

ATP	Alternative teacher preparation
CITI	Collaborative Institute Training Initiative
COE	College of education
ECS	The Education Commission of States
IHE	Institute of Higher Education
INTASC	Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium
NCEI	National Center for Education Information
NCLB	No Child Left Behind Act
NCTAF	National Commission on Teaching and America's Future
TTT	Trainers of Teacher Trainers
USDOE	United States Department of Education

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Alternative teacher preparation (ATP) has flourished throughout the United States with 500 different programs in approximately 47 states (Feistritzer, 2005). The programs vary in their entry requirements, length, curriculum offerings, internships, training, and retention rates. ATP programs are not new phenomena. ATP emanated from the 1960s education-reform movement in the United States (Bogges, 2008; Gallagher & Bailey, 2000; Weiner, 2000).

At its inception, ATP reform focused on addressing teacher shortages and providing more quality teachers to schools in urban and rural areas (Gallagher & Bailey, 2000; Walsh & Jacobs, 2007; Weiner, 2000). Opposition to traditional teacher preparation programs (licensing and credentialing) in the 1960s forced lawmakers to reevaluate how teachers were recruited, particularly in high-need urban areas.

The National Teacher Corps program emerged from the public's mounting frustration with the perceived ineptness of university teacher education programs in providing quality teachers where they were most needed (Weiner, 2000). In 1965, the Corps "recruited, prepared, and placed teachers in schools with high populations of disadvantaged children and youth" (Gallagher & Bailey, 2000, p. 28). An outgrowth of this national reform program was the Cardozo Project in Urban Teaching, an ATP program aimed at improving educational services in poor Black communities in conjunction with District of Columbia Public Schools. The goal of the Project was to

integrate teaching, curriculum development, and community involvement to recreate the role of urban teachers (Bogges, 2008). Likewise, in the 1970s, the Trainers of Teacher Trainers (TTT) program was a federally funded program designed to foster collaboration between urban universities, schools, and communities (Weiner, 2000, p. 393; Weiner et al., 2001).

Since the 1960s, many ATP programs have emerged and evolved. Professional development schools (PDSs; Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005; Weiner, 2000) and university and school-district partnerships (Bogges, 2008) are examples of initiatives providing alternative routes to teaching. However, urban teacher residencies are a burgeoning practice in urban ATP (Berry, Montgomery, & Snyder, 2008).

The proliferation of alternative routes to teaching has increased the number of teachers in the United States (Jacob, 2007). Feistritzer's (2005) profile of alternative routes to teaching revealed that in 2004 almost 35,000 people entered teaching through alternative teaching pathways in 1 year alone. Over half of the individuals taking an ATP route are doing so through college and university programs (Feistritzer, 2005; U.S. Department of Education, 2006). Feistritzer's research further supported claims that alternative pathways to teaching are attracting older and more diverse candidates (see also Masci & Stotko, 2006; Schoon & Sandoval, 2000). Her data revealed that of the 2,000 teachers surveyed upon entry into an ATP program, approximately 63% were 30 or older, and 39% were 40 or older.

Feistritzer's findings also revealed that from 2000-2001, 37% of alternative-program entrants were male, which was 12% higher than the males in the teaching force (25%). Also, the number of people of color who entered alternative routes to teaching

from 2000-2001 (32%) was 21% higher than those in the overall teaching force (11%). Lastly, 50% of the survey respondents taught in large cities, identified as having populations of at least 250,000.

The Southeastern state used in this dissertation offers six alternative routes to teacher certification:

- A teacher academy for preparation and pedagogy,
- master's degree-level initial preparation,
- permitted personnel (issues permits for areas of specialty),
- postbaccalaureate nondegree preparation programs,
- postbaccalaureate nondegree preparation programs for transitioning military personnel, and
- Teach for America (Teach Now, 2009, Summary of Alternate Routes to Teacher Certification section, para. 1).

A June 2008 report revealed that of the 2,983 teachers hired in that state in 2007, 25.7% completed traditional preparation programs, and 22.5% completed ATP programs. The state's ATP programs not only contributed to a larger pool of available teaching candidates, but also purportedly diversified the teacher workforce. In 2008, the state's teacher-certification agency reported that 30% of the 3,457 alternatively prepared teachers were male in comparison to the 19.1% who made up the total teacher workforce. Also, the number of Black teachers in the state's alternative preparation programs (45.6%) exceeded the number of Blacks in the overall teacher workforce (22.2%) by 23.4%.

There are over 30 traditional college- and university-based teacher preparation programs in the state (National Center for Alternative Certification, 2009). One third offer ATP programs. In 2009, the state's certification agency indicated that only four colleges and universities offered state-approved ATP programs that provide pathways to certification. According to the certification agency, approximately 30% of the state's alternatively prepared candidates were trained by both public and private colleges in 2008. The state's agency plays a pivotal role in the development of teachers because it sets the standards for teacher preparation programs in the state.

### **Background of the Problem**

The Education Commission of States (ECS), National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (NCTAF), and the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) each called for educational reform that raised standards for teachers and ensured high-quality teachers for all students (Allen, 2003; NCTAF, 1996; USDOE, 2006).

NCTAF (1996) challenged the nation to meet a goal of providing high-quality teachers for all students, prompting less-wealthy school districts to hire high-quality individuals. NCTAF provided two reports addressing national concerns regarding teacher preparation and the needs of urban schools: *No Dream Denied: A Pledge to America's Children* and *What Matters Most: Teaching for America's Future*. In 1996, NCTAF's *What Matters Most* proclaimed that "a caring, competent, and qualified teacher for every child is the most important ingredient in education reform and, we believe, the most frequently overlooked" (p. 3).

However, NCTAF cited flaws in teacher preparation as an obstacle to fulfilling its goals. In *What Matters Most*, NCTAF outlined seven formidable challenges and five

detracting myths about teaching that it argued were stifling reform efforts in American education:

#### Challenges

1. Low expectations for student performance.
2. Unenforced standards for teachers.
3. Major flaws in teacher preparation.
4. Painfully slipshod teacher recruitment.
5. Inadequate induction for beginning teachers.
6. Lack of professional development and rewards for knowledge and skill.
7. Schools that are structured for failure rather than success. (NCTAF, 1996, p. 24)

#### Myths

Myth #1: Anyone can teach.

Myth #2: Teacher preparation is not much use.

Myth #3: Teachers don't work hard enough.

Myth #4: Tenure is the problem.

Myth #5: Unions block reform. (NCTAF, 1996, p.51)

NCTAF recommended greater partnerships between the universities that prepared prospective teachers and the school districts that employed them. These partnerships would provide schools with what they needed and children with what they deserved. A stronger bridge between theory, practice, clinical experience, and reflection was suggested to overcome the challenges and to counter the myths.

In 2006, NCTAF declared that the United States would need to hire over 2 million teachers as a result of increased enrollments, eligible retirees leaving the workforce, and the persistent and growing attrition of new teachers in American schools. NCTAF surmised that “although some of these will be former teachers returning to the field, most will be newly prepared during this time, and the quality of their preparation will, to a large extent, influence the quality of teaching our schools provide” (NCTAF, 2006, p. 8). NCTAF suggested that a crusade to have the best prepared teachers in schools was not only a matter of improving students’ education but also a matter of improving America’s future. Furthermore, NCTAF contended that teachers’ lack of success is a matter of ignorance not defiance; teachers must be trained for the challenges of teaching more diverse learners. NCTAF stated,

As students with a wider range of learning needs enter and stay in school—a growing number whose first language is not English, many others with learning differences, and others with learning disabilities—teachers need access to the growing knowledge that exists about how to teach these learners effectively. More teacher education programs are preparing teachers well for these new demands, but they are still too few and far between. (2006, p. 8)

NCTAF repeatedly emphasized the importance of teachers to educational advancement and the academic achievement of students.

When NCTAF had almost completed its goals in *What Matters Most*, it produced a second report in 2003 called *No Dream Denied: A Pledge to America’s Children*. The 2003 report addressed the concern of teacher retention and revealed that attrition is higher



in low-income schools that have high concentrations of underprepared and inexperienced teachers. NCTAF reaffirmed the need for high-quality teacher preparation and its influences on both students' and teachers' success. "We have concluded that the nation cannot achieve quality teaching for every child unless those teachers can be kept in the classroom" (NCTAF, 2003, p. 7). Utilizing findings from 2002, the NCTAF report revealed that within the first 3 years of teaching, one third of new teachers leave as compared to half during the 5th year. However, in low-income urban schools, NCTAF observed that the turnover rate was about one third higher than in other schools.

Though *No Dream Denied* provided several action steps for addressing teacher attrition rates, it emphasized a stronger focus on quality teacher preparation, accreditation, and licensing. Embracing the standards set forth by the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) and the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, the report identified several dimensions of quality teacher preparation programs that ranged from recruitment and assessment to support beyond formal preparation. Stressing the importance of quality preparation and its influence on teacher retention, NCTAF stated the following:

Without the integration of knowledge and skills in a well-designed and carefully supervised clinical practice settings, the education and training of a new teacher is incomplete. The lack of clinical skills and experience feeds the high levels of burnout and attrition found among new teachers throughout the country. (2003, p. 77)

Both traditional teacher education programs and alternative teacher pathways are challenged with making necessary adjustments to enhance the highly qualified teacher pool.

In 2003, Allen produced a report for ECS called *Eight Questions on Teacher Preparation: What Does the Research Say?* He reviewed 92 research studies on teacher preparation. The findings indicated that poor students, as well as those students at risk of failing, can perform much better if they have top-performing teachers. Furthermore, a teacher's performance was noted as a potential consequence of his or her preparation, and teacher preparation was presented as an undisputed national concern. The report also found that some scholars applauded the efforts of teacher preparation programs, and others suggested a need for more alternative pathways to teaching.

Regardless of the route selected for teacher preparation, Allen (2003) contended that every teacher must be prepared for the classroom when he or she begins teaching. He posed two questions relevant to this dissertation: "How can new teachers be trained and educated to ensure their effectiveness?" and "What are the necessary and sufficient components of a successful preparation program?" (The Critical Importance of Solid Teacher Preparation section, para. 6). Following Allen's investigation of teacher preparation strategies that could positively influence a teacher's effectiveness in hard-to-staff schools, he made the following suggestion: Instead of concentrating on increasing teachers' salaries and changing the leadership in urban, hard-to-staff schools, policymakers should concentrate on teacher preparation. This dissertation seeks to reveal how ATP programs are responding to the considerations outlined by Allen's 2003 ECS

report and how Title I elementary school principals perceive the preparation that teachers working in urban areas received.

NCLB pursued the same central goal as Allen's ECS report and both NCTAF reports of providing all students in the United States with high-quality teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2007; U.S. Department of Education, 2006). The Transition to Teaching grant was established by the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE) to provide funding for state-approved ATP programs, which would ideally increase the pool of high-quality teachers. The grant provided funds to institutes of higher education (IHEs), school systems, and for-profit and nonprofit organizations to establish alternative routes to teaching. Programs that received funds from the grant were charged to recruit individuals (paraprofessionals, career changers, and college graduates) willing to serve in high-need schools for at least 3 years. USDOE's Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 defined a high-need school as one that

- (A) is located in an area in which the percentage of students from families with incomes below the poverty line is 30 percent or more; or
- (B)(i) is located in an area with a high percentage of out-of-field teachers, as defined in section 2102;
- (ii) is within the top quartile of elementary schools and secondary schools statewide, as ranked by the number of unfilled, available teacher positions at the schools;
- (iii) is located in an area in which there is a high teacher turnover rate; or

- (iv) is located in an area in which there is a high percentage of teachers who are not certified or licensed. (2009, Sec. 2312 Definitions, para. 3)

NCLB's call for the equal distribution of high-quality teachers is an important initiative because the *Secretary's Fifth Annual Report on Teacher Quality*, published by the USDOE (2006), found a higher percentage of teachers without full credentials in high-poverty, high-need schools than in low-poverty, high-achieving schools. Under NCLB, a teacher is considered highly qualified if he or she holds a "bachelor's degree, has full state certification, and demonstrates competency in the core academic subject they teach" (USDOE, p. 1).

### **The Problem**

Teacher quality and preparation make the most notable difference in the education of a child (Darling-Hammond & Baratz-Snowden, 2005; Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 1999; Donaldson, 2009; NCTAF, 1996). Teacher-reform efforts have continuously insisted on high-quality teachers for high-need urban schools. The reforms ultimately challenge the degree to which colleges and universities prepare teachers for classroom settings in urban schools (Berry, 2005; Weiner, 2000).

As colleges and universities establish urban ATP programs, they must investigate whether consonance or dissonance exists between their program objectives and the perceived needs of principals in the types of schools where their students will likely be placed. In response to this little-researched topic, this study addresses the following question: Can university-based urban ATP program leaders thoroughly assess the effectiveness of their programs without the voices of principals?

This study will center on the voices of principals, which are often missing from research about educational-reform initiatives that address the staffing challenges of Title I urban schools. The lack of research on principals' perspectives prompts an investigation that illuminates their position on urban teachers' readiness, school-staffing challenges, high-quality teachers, novice teachers' challenges, and teacher preparation programs.

Teacher preparation serves a pivotal role in training individuals to work with diverse learners, especially students who are racially, ethnically, socioeconomically, and academically marginalized (Cochran-Smith, 1991, 2000; McIntyre, 2002). Others scholars (Anyon, 1997; Delpit, 1995; Friere, 1993) have asserted that teachers working in urban schools must understand their role as teachers and the degree to which external factors and societal structures create challenges for low-income students.

Berry, Montgomery, and Snyder (2008) found that colleges are deficient in providing the high caliber of teachers needed to meet the needs of underserved children in high-need schools and often confer degrees upon students who are ill-equipped for these settings. Hence, they contended that

preparing non-traditional teacher candidates—who are absolutely essential to meeting teacher workforce requirements—requires specialized, carefully crafted opportunities for learning. Teacher education programs that prepare traditional college age students for teaching in a high-needs school will not be the same as readying the 45-year old mid-career switcher for the same teaching assignment. IHEs have not always readily adapted their teacher education programs to different constituencies and customers. . . .

“One-size-fits-all” preparation programs can no longer be the modus operandi of IHEs. (p. 14)

Zeichner (2006) echoed these sentiments in his work on the future of college- and university-based programs. In his research, the need for college-based teacher education programs was questioned. Zeichner also discussed the condition of urban schools, which was covered in a plenary address delivered by the superintendent of Boston Public Schools, Thomas W. Payzant. The address was delivered in 2004 at the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education’s annual meeting in the United States. Payzant (as cited in Zeichner) stated,

Colleges and universities will play a role only if they make significant changes in how we do business so that the teachers prepared in these programs will choose to teach in urban schools and will be prepared to be successful. (p. 329)

Zeichner further asserted that teacher preparation programs’ characteristics (whether alternative or traditional) and quality significantly influence teacher outcomes.

To Zeichner’s point, Darling-Hammond (2006b) identified various teacher preparation programs that have garnered notable recognition from scholars for their effectiveness. Darling-Hammond’s research in *Powerful Teacher Education: Lessons from Exemplary Programs* identified seven colleges and universities across the United States that she recognized as highly successful at teacher education: Bank Street College, University of Virginia, Alverno College, Wheelock College, University of Southern Maine, University of California Berkley, and Trinity College. Program offerings at these

institutions ranged from 4- and 5-year bachelor's programs to graduate-level models and nontraditional designs that attract midcareer switchers.

Darling-Hammond (2006b) found that the following two approaches to teacher preparation contributed to the uniqueness and success of the seven programs: "learning centered (that is, supportive of focused, in-depth learning that results in powerful thinking and proficient performance on the part of students) and learner-centered (responsive to individual students' experiences, interests, talents, needs, and cultural backgrounds)" (p. 8). She reported that graduates from these schools were constantly sought by principals for teaching positions and were eventually selected by superintendents for administrative positions.

One of the shared goals of these programs is to ensure that the program participants understand the importance of nurturing students' aspirations and enhancing students' educational outcomes and opportunities. Darling-Hammond (2006b) gathered data to assess the programs in several ways: by interviewing program graduates about their preparation and the employers about the graduates' preparedness, reviewing the research about exemplary programs and their processes, investigating the capabilities of program graduates that enabled them to succeed, and examining the infrastructure of the organizations that included a review of the policies and practices that enabled each program to succeed.

Wineburg (2006) also conducted research exploring how universities assess the effectiveness of their programs. Her emphasis was on the data that university-based programs use to evaluate program outcomes. She cited findings from a survey distributed by the American Association of State Colleges and Universities which represents over

400 colleges and universities throughout the United States. Survey results indicated that practically all of the 240 participating institutions solicit stakeholder feedback (e.g., from school administrators and cooperating teachers) about their programs. This solicitation is important because sometimes the voices of educators are absent in teacher education policy-reform initiatives.

Early research conducted by Darling-Hammond and Sykes (1999) noted that more in-depth teacher training that was not compressed into short sessions had greater impact on teacher readiness. Their work cited findings from a RAND Corporation study that compared two nontraditional routes to teaching. One group consisted of graduate-level preservice programs requiring extensive coursework and clinical experiences, and the other group consisted of short-term programs only requiring 4 to 8 weeks of preparation prior to placement in a classroom. The RAND study noted that

the candidates who were prepared in the more extensive programs were much more satisfied than those in the short summer programs with the amount and quality of preparation they received, reported fewer difficulties when they entered classroom teaching, and were more likely to say they planned to stay in the profession. (Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 1999, p. 208)

In light of the criticism that Colleges of Education (COEs) have received, they are changing the way that they prepare teachers for high-need urban schools. This research identifies how the initiatives of some universities that have responded to the need for creating alternative pathways to prepare teachers for diverse school environments respond to the perceived needs of school principals serving in urban areas. The voices of



principals serving Title I schools in urban areas must be included when programs are established expressly to address their staffing needs.

### **The Purpose**

Over half of ATP programs are administered by colleges and universities (Feistritzer, 2005; USDOE, 2006). This research examines how Title I elementary school principals perceive teacher readiness for Title I urban schools and explores how some universities are addressing teacher preparation for high-need urban schools. University-based urban ATP program features and characteristics will be explored in this dissertation, and principals' perspectives of the preparation needed and provided by university-based ATP programs for urban teacher development will be examined.

This study will add to the existing body of knowledge on ATP and urban school teacher preparation and could influence future work in this area. Through an examination of urban teacher preparation, this dissertation also addresses national concerns presented by ECS, NCTAF, and NCLB regarding teacher quality and the distribution of high-quality teachers. These reform efforts sought to raise accountability standards for teachers with the intent of improving student achievement. A greater investment in teacher preparation was noted as paramount in A. Levine's controversial 2006 report called *Educating School Teachers*.

Of specific concern in the literature is the manner in which traditional schools of education are adjusting their programs to better prepare teachers to meet the staffing needs of urban schools. Identifying a need to provide urban schools with quality teachers, NCTAF (2003) insisted that

the shortfall is particularly severe in low-income communities and rural areas, where inexperienced and underprepared teachers are too often concentrated in schools that are structured for failure, rather than success.

The price being paid by students who need quality teaching is unacceptable. (p. 5)

The perspectives of Title I urban elementary school principals, who are recipients of candidates from a university-based urban ATP program, are critical to this research. Specifically, this dissertation was informed by the perceived staffing needs of school principals. As stakeholders in alternative certification reform initiatives, the principals' views of how university-based urban ATP programs prepare teachers for their schools are significant. This dissertation does not serve to evaluate university-based urban ATP programs; rather, it explores the perceptions of principals relative to urban teacher preparation and slightly narrows the huge gap that exists in research on these principals' perspectives.

### **Guiding Research Questions**

This dissertation seeks to answer the following question: How do Title I elementary school principals in urban areas perceive teacher preparation and the impact of teacher preparation provided by university-based urban ATP programs?

Principals will be asked the following research questions:

1. What skills and knowledge can best prepare new teachers for working in Title I urban schools?
2. What type of preservice or internship experiences should prospective teachers have prior to becoming the teacher of record in Title I urban schools?

3. What admission and selection criteria should be considered by university-based urban ATP program leaders for accepting candidates into their programs who will likely work in Title I urban schools?
4. How should university-based urban ATP program leaders assess the readiness of program completers for Title I urban schools?
5. What support structures are needed from university-based urban ATP programs for prospective teachers of Title I urban schools?
6. In what ways, if any, should the training differ for teachers who will likely work in non-Title I high-socioeconomic low-minority schools and teachers who work in Title I low-socioeconomic high-minority schools?

### **Rationale**

Noting a shift in program practices, Darling-Hammond and Sykes (1999) revealed that “gradually, schools, colleges, and departments of education began to redesign aspects of their teacher preparation programs to include courses and field experiences that addressed the needs of diverse students” (p. 92). Some traditional COEs are making program changes by establishing alternative routes intended to address the staffing needs of urban schools. However, in the ECS report, Allen (2003) posited that growth is limited and interest is questionable. “With relatively few exceptions . . . our nation’s teacher preparation institutions do not seek to equip their graduates to teach in such schools” (Question 5, Significance of the Question section, para. 4). Additionally, Allen stated that better preparation of teachers for urban schools could increase teachers’ success and potentially increase retention. Teacher preparation programs, whether traditional 4-year university programs or alternative pathways to teaching, are challenged

with equipping prospective teachers with the knowledge, skills, and experiences needed to be successful in urban school settings (Allen, 2003).

Responding to charges leveled against traditional teacher education programs, Zeichner (2006) encouraged COEs to embrace multiple pathways to teaching and to extend the goals of teacher education “beyond raising scores on standardized achievement tests” (p. 330). Further, he suggested that we “broaden our vision for teachers beyond compliant implementers of teaching scripts [and] change the center of gravity of teacher education programs so that the connections between universities, schools, and communities in the preparation of teachers are stronger” (p. 330).

Zeichner (2006) described quality teacher preparation programs, whether traditional or alternative, as those that consistently and clearly articulate a vision about how teachers teach and how students learn, strengthen teaching methods and clinical experiences, outline performance standards to assess teachers, and establish clinical experiences away from the universities and in the communities where teachers are likely to teach.

Similarly, Darling-Hammond and Baratz-Snowden (2005) offered that teachers learn best when they “encounter content in contexts in which it can be applied” (p. 41). Hence, they emphasized that prospective teachers must understand the correlation between educational theory and practical realities of teaching in the field. They also insisted that teachers learn by teaching under the guidance of experienced practitioners, observing teaching in practice, interacting with the students they teach, and sharing experiences with other student teachers. In sum, Darling-Hammond and Baratz-Snowden stated that teacher preparation programs, whether traditional or alternative, must ensure

that their recruitment and admission criteria are tailored for identifying the best candidates and that the course content, pedagogies, and clinical experiences have been mastered by their candidates before they exit the programs.

Research suggests that teachers who are exposed to the elements of teacher training, as described by Zeichner (2006) as well as Darling-Hammond and Baratz-Snowden (2005), are more likely to remain in the profession, consequently reducing the attrition rates in teaching. To this point, Donaldson (2009), referring to the theory of job commitment, stated that

individuals who are more committed to their jobs are more likely to remain in those positions. In university classes and practica, students in urban-focused preparation programs come to understand in a concrete way what it is like to teach in urban schools. . . . Theory suggests that individuals with realistic job previews are more likely to hold realistic expectations for themselves, to fulfill these expectations, and remain on the job. (p. 350)

Cochran-Smith (2005) cited findings from a study conducted by the American Educational Research Association (AERA) Panel on teacher education. The AERA Panel “specifically intended to assess the weight of the evidence about the impact of teacher education policies and practices on professional performance, pupils learning, and other important school outcomes” (Cochran-Smith, 2005, p. 305). The review of research compared the impact of traditional teacher education programs to that of alternative pathways; neither route was considered superior to the other (see also Viadero, 2010). In fact, the findings suggested that research on teacher education should closely examine components and characteristics of teacher preparation instead of

focusing on program type. It was evident from the research that certain aspects of teacher training are related to teacher quality: fieldwork, school and university collaboration, and coursework. The AERA Panel also indicated that research was lacking on “the impact of preparing teachers for diverse populations” (p. 302). Of equal importance to the AERA Panel was a need for research to examine the interconnectedness of the strategies and activities in teacher education and what prospective teachers actually learn and do once placed in schools.

Evidence about the effects of teacher training and preparation were further highlighted by Darling-Hammond (2006b). Her work also offers counter arguments to perceptions of the dismal condition and failing efforts of the COEs in the United States that are responsible for preparing high-quality teachers capable of teaching diverse learners. Darling-Hammond argued that “if the nation’s classrooms are to be filled with teachers who can teach ambitious skills to all learners, the solution must lie in large part with strong, universal teacher education” (p. 5). She suggested that a great need exists to have high-quality top-performing teachers in public urban schools where children have less community support and less access to resources that could enhance their learning opportunities.

Additionally, scholars presumed that students exposed to top-performing teachers have greater opportunities for academic improvement (Borman and Dowling, 2008). In light of research on teacher retention and the disparities between the academic performance of various groups of students, COEs and ATP programs have altered components of existing programs and created new preparation models to enhance teacher

readiness in general and teacher readiness for urban schools in particular (Berry, 2005, Berry, Montgomery, Curtis, et al., 2008; Masci & Stotko, 2006).

Berry, Montgomery, Curtis et al. (2008) acknowledged that some, but not all, traditional COE programs and ATP programs are able to produce teachers, especially for urban areas, who have a deep understanding of content knowledge and know “how students learn, and how to assess their learning, [who have the] skills to work with special needs and second language learners, [the] ability to engage and motivate diverse students, and strategies to reach out to families” (p. 8). The authors asserted that quality preparation programs are not exclusive to one camp or the other, traditional or alternative. However, Berry, Montgomery, Curtis, et al. insisted that quality programs must possess certain characteristics that contribute to the effective development of teachers.

Berry, Montgomery, Curtis, et al. (2008) identified urban teacher residencies (UTRs) such as the Boston Teacher Residency (BTR) and Chicago’s Academy for Urban School Leadership (AUSL), working with Boston Public Schools and Chicago Public Schools respectively, as avenues for recruiting, preparing, and sustaining viable teacher pools for urban, hard-to-staff schools. Some of the essential principles that undergird UTRs include

the selective recruitment of highly qualified candidates, the expectation that teachers are extensively prepared before they begin to teach, a focus on meeting the needs of high-needs school districts, and an approach that offers high-quality support for their graduates after they become teachers of record. (Berry, Montgomery, Curtis, et al., p. 7)

With new adaptations to traditional 4-year teacher education programs and advances in ATP-program models, exploring how programs' goals and their participants' experiences align with the needs of school districts and the specific needs of urban school principals is worthy of investigation. Vannest, Mahadevan, Mason, and Temple-Harvey (2009) posited that perceptions about educational policies, both positive and negative, are important when evaluating how policies and educational reform initiatives are meeting the needs of their intended audience. Vannest et al. also stated that "perception of impact is not equal to the quantifiable effects of policy implementation but rather informs participants' views of implementation and beliefs. These more subjective measures affect fidelity of implementation" (p. 148).

However, leaders of educational policy and educational reform initiatives have not readily elicited feedback from school administrators. A. Levine's (2006) research generated extensive data on nonprofit university-based teacher education programs to better understand how well these programs educate prospective teachers and prepare them for school environments with student populations that are academically, racially, economically, and linguistically diverse.

According to A. Levine (2006), his work is not a defense for or an attack on schools of education. Rather, he declared that "education schools have strengths that go unrecognized by their detractors and they have weaknesses that they are unwilling to acknowledge" (p. 6). He conducted case studies that included 28 schools and departments of education throughout the United States, which represented a cadre of diverse programs. He also surveyed several groups of individuals: 5,469 education school faculty (40% response rate); deans, chairs, and directors of all of the schools of



education in the United States (53% response rate); 15,468 school of education alumni (34% response rate); and 1,800 principals (41% response rate). A. Levine's (2006) findings revealed that only 40% of principals thought schools of education were preparing teachers well, and 62% of alumni did not feel prepared for their classroom realities.

Voltz (1999) conducted a national study assessing the perceptions of educators regarding the challenges in urban schools. Her intent was to give voice to urban school educators, whose voices were sometimes dismissed or absent from the literature. Voltz surveyed 192 principals and 148 teachers from the 25 largest urban schools in the United States. The respondents were asked to rate their perceptions of urban-school challenges as well as to list promising practices that could improve urban teaching. Of relevance to this dissertation was the reference to personnel concerns: "teacher burnout, high teacher attrition rates, and teacher reluctance and/or unpreparedness to teach in urban areas" (Voltz, 1999, p. 212). Voltz concluded that the attitudes and beliefs that educators have about the challenges facing urban schools, though not necessarily representative of all urban schools, can impact how teachers perceive their jobs and their ability to positively influence changes in urban schools. Her findings revealed that changes in preservice and inservice teacher preparation activities could address some of the staffing challenges in urban schools.

This dissertation includes the voices of Title I elementary school principals by exposing their staffing challenges and needs in the face of reform efforts structured to fill staffing gaps in Title I urban schools. Principals' perceptions of the needs of new and

prospective teachers as well as the training provided by teacher preparation programs are central to this research.

### **Significance**

Several scholars have identified exemplary teacher preparation programs, whether alternative or traditional (Berry, Montgomery, & Snyder, 2008; Darling-Hammond, 2006b; Zeichner, 2006). A. Levine's (2006) study, which surveyed education school deans and university faculty regarding the best model for teacher preparation, provided results warranting further investigation of ATP programs. He found that only 1% of the deans and faculty suggested that programs offering alternative pathways to certification were among the best ways to prepare teachers. The author further stated, "There is seemingly an 'anything goes' attitude about teacher preparation. All models of teacher education—with the exception of alternative certification—seem reasonably acceptable" (p. 38).

Additionally, A. Levine's (2006) controversial survey indicated a need for illuminating the types of alternative programs that may garner exemplary status in teacher preparation. This dissertation seeks to build upon the work of several researchers (Berry, Montgomery, Curtis, et al., 2008; Darling-Hammond, 2006a, 2006b; A. Levine, 2006; see also Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005; Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 1999) and moves beyond the debates comparing ATP programs to traditional university-based school of education programs. NCTAF (2003) stated,

It is well past time to abandon the futile debate over "traditional" vs. "alternative" teacher preparation. The key issue for the Commission, and the nation, was not *how* new teachers are prepared but *how well* they were

prepared and supported, whatever the preparation pathway they may choose. (p. 19)

As work is conducted in this area and teacher programs evolve, bringing into the fold a focus on preparing teachers for urban schools, Talbert-Johnson (2008) added,

Our efforts must consistently focus on obtaining candidates that exhibit the ethical dispositions that are required in urban contexts. Further research needs to identify program components that can affect candidates' perceptions, beliefs, and dispositions relevant to working with a range of diverse students and families who populate urban schools today. (p. 157)

This dissertation advances the research of urban ATP programs at the university level. Moreover, it highlights the national crusade for improving the quality and training of teachers, especially those individuals serving high-need, high-poverty, and academically low-achieving students. Additionally, this dissertation responds to several recommendations and suggestions (ECS, 2003; NCTAF, 1996, 2003).

First, over a decade ago in *What Matters Most*, NCTAF (1996) challenged schools of education and policymakers to “reinvent teacher preparation and professional development [and to] fix teacher recruitment and put qualified teachers in every classroom” (p. 64). Second, in *No Dream Denied*, NCTAF (2003) suggested that teacher preparation program designers should

require all preparation programs—“traditional” and “alternative”—to deliver rigorous education designed to develop and instill the attributes of highly qualified teachers . . . [and] create federal, state, and district level

incentives to recruit and prepare teachers in high-need disciplines and local areas. (p. 25)

In the report, NCTAF also recommended that accreditation standards for teacher preparation be rigorous, and NCTAF charged the leadership within these programs with the responsibility of ensuring high quality.

Third, this study seeks to provide answers to the two questions previously referred to by Allen (2003) in the ECS report: “How can new teachers be trained and educated to ensure their effectiveness?” and “What are the necessary and sufficient components of a successful preparation program?” (The Critical Importance of Solid Teacher Preparation section, para. 6).

Lastly, this research will provide additional evidence for university-based urban ATP program leaders to determine the consonance or dissonance between their urban teacher preparation and the satisfaction of their programs’ stakeholders: school principals.

### **Methodological Overview**

A qualitative approach was used to conduct this research (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Purposive sampling—“selecting respondents on the basis of what they can contribute to the researcher’s understanding of the phenomenon under study” (Merriam, 1998, p. 83)—was used to identify research participants.

Four elementary school principals who have alternatively prepared teachers from or whose schools served as a site for interns from a particular university-based urban ATP program participated in this study. Principals who had at least a 2-year association with Title I schools were of interest for this study. All study participants indicated that

they had worked in Title I schools for the majority of their educational careers. The least number of years that any principal worked in education was 16. The intent of this research is to understand how principals perceive the preparation needed for teachers who will work in urban areas and how some university-based ATP programs, as educational-reform initiatives, are meeting the needs of their stakeholders. Interviews with the study participants were approximately 1.5 hours and follow-up phone calls were made when necessary with each candidate.

The number of participants selected for this study represents reasonable coverage for exploring the purpose of this study using interpretive methods of inquiry (Dukes, 1984). Additionally, the sample size allowed me to conduct in-depth probing with and extensive analysis of the participants during interviews. I conducted all of the interviews.

Semistructured interviewing techniques as presented by Rubin & Rubin (2005) were used to capture interviews during the late summer semester of 2010. I elicited support from an individual not involved in the study to transcribe all interviews. Atlas.ti was used for the coding and the identification of emerging themes in the transcripts (see Appendix C for coding categories). Coding categories unveiled regularities or patterns that were evident in the data (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007).

Additionally, as the researcher, I reviewed artifacts from five university-based urban ATP programs such as program overviews, purpose statements, brochures, manuals, rubrics, and program survey. All data collected, including interviews and artifacts, were stored in a locking file cabinet in my home office. Also secured in locking file cabinets were any electronic data that were stored on hard drives. Passwords were used to protect electronic information.

I called each principal to elicit participation. Letters of consent were sent to each participant that included information required by Georgia State University's Institutional Review Board when engaging human subjects. This information included the purpose of the research, timeframe for and extent of participation, individual risks, and ethical considerations (see Appendix A for letter of consent).

### **Definition of Terms**

1. Alternative teacher preparation (ATP): Historically, this term has been used to refer to a variety of avenues to becoming a licensed teacher other than the traditional college or university program. Humphrey and Wechsler (2007) defined "alternative certification as programs or licensing routes that allow persons to enter the teaching profession by earning a standard license or teacher certificate without completing a traditional 4- or 5-year university-based program" (p. 485; see also Legler, 2002; National Center for Alternative Certification, (n.d.); Walsh & Jacobs, 2007).

ATP is an abbreviation used in this dissertation for alternative teacher preparation programs and will be used interchangeably with phrases such as alternative certification, alternative pathways, and alternative routes.

2. University-based ATP programs: These are defined as postbaccalaureate programs with options that result exclusively in teacher licensure or both a master's and teacher licensure. Accelerated teacher certification programs take less than the traditional 4 years to complete, varying from 19 months to 2 years. These programs accept candidates who have not served as certified teachers and who have the minimum grade-point average (typically 2.5). The candidates may

be career switchers (noneducation majors) or former teacher education majors.

Urban university-based ATP programs focus on developing teachers for urban school environments and place candidates in urban schools for internships.

3. Preservice training: This is similar to an internship experience for teaching candidates before they enter a classroom. Preservice training typically consists of taking series of courses, conducting classroom observations, planning lessons, and some degree of teaching in the field before or during a teaching assignment (Constantine et al., 2009; Terry, 2004).
4. Traditional university-based teacher preparation programs. These are any 4-year undergraduate programs offered through schools of education, typically consisting of coursework, observations, and field experiences (Walsh & Jacobs, 2007).
5. Teacher retention: This is maintaining continuous employment of teachers within a school district or at a particular school (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Guarino, Santibanez, & Daley, 2006; Inman & Marlow, 2004; Kearney, 2008; Macdonald, 1999).
6. Teacher attrition and teacher turnover: This refers to those who leave the profession voluntarily or involuntarily, categorized as retirements, resignations, or terminations. In slight contrast to attrition, teacher migration accounts for those teachers transferring from one school to another and sometimes from one district to another (Grissmer & Kirby, 1997; Ingersoll & Smith, 2003; Stinebrickner, 1998, 2002).
7. Urban schools are often characterized as having higher concentrations of students

on free or reduced-priced meals, of low socioeconomic status, for which English is a second language, who are minority, and who exhibit low-academic performance (Jacob, 2007). Sachs (2004) described urban schools as those that are “generally large, high density schools in metropolitan areas that serve a population subject to social, economic, and political disparities because of population mobility, diverse ethnic/cultural identity, low socioeconomic status, and/or limited language proficiency” (p. 178; see also, Watson, Charner-Laird, Kilpatrick, Szczesiul, & Gordon, 2006).

8. High-need, hard-to-staff schools: These are terms often used to categorize urban schools with high-turnover rates, teacher shortages, and high-minority student populations with poverty levels of 30% or more (USDOE, 2009, Definition section, para. 3).

### **Overview of the Study**

The following pages will provide further details of the study. In Chapter 2, a review of relevant literature will be presented. Chapter 3 will provide greater details of the methodology used for the research. Chapter 4 will include results from the research questions. Chapter 5 will discuss findings and implications from the study and include suggestions for future research.



## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

Student success is often cited as a result of quality teaching and quality teachers (Donaldson, 2009). Obtaining high-quality teachers is observed as the most critical, but least equitably distributed resource in education (Ingersoll, 2004). Therefore, schools and school districts within the competitive realm of improving students' academic performance are charged with finding the best qualified individuals to serve students (Theobald, 1990). Reporting on the importance of teacher quality, Borman and Dowling (2008) indicated that students can be negatively affected by having underprepared teachers, potentially resulting in a change in student performance by one grade level. This dissertation explores the perceptions that Title I elementary school principals have about teacher readiness for urban school environments and how some university-based urban ATP programs may influence teacher preparedness.

This chapter provides a review of literature relevant to teacher preparation for Title I urban school environments, principals' perception of educational reform initiatives established to fill staffing gaps, and how some universities are responding to the need of preparing teachers for diverse school environments. The chapter is divided into several sections. First, the conceptual framework guiding the dissertation will be presented. Second, research citing characteristics of urban school environments, urban school

recruitment and retention challenges, and urban teacher preparation will be discussed. Third, work citing principals' perceptions of educational-reform initiatives affecting urban schools will be shared. Fourth, a review of university-based ATP programs that specifically focus on urban teacher preparation will be provided. Lastly, this chapter will include literature on teacher preparation inclusive of traditional teacher preparation and ATP.

### **Conceptual Framework**

The recruitment, distribution, and retention of high-quality teachers continue to be a challenge for urban and rural schools in the United States (Allen, 2003). NCLB challenged all schools and school districts with providing every child with highly qualified teachers by the end of the 2005-2006 school year (USDOE, 2009). Low-income, high-minority, and high-poverty areas most often employ inexperienced and underprepared teachers (Darling-Hammond, 1994; Ingersoll, 2004; Kozol, 1991; NCTAF, 2003). Furthermore, teachers in urban high-poverty schools are more likely to leave than those in suburban low-poverty schools (Allen, 2005; Jacob, 2007). The literature references the limited ability of traditional COEs to meet the staffing demands of urban schools and the specific needs of urban students (Haberman, 1995; Talbert-Johnson, 2006). Moreover, some scholars question whether alternatively prepared teachers receive adequate training and if they are as effective as their traditionally trained counterparts (Laczko-Kerr & Berliner, 2002).

COEs battled with growing public interest to deregulate or dismantle teacher preparation and state certification requirements. In the early 1960s, due to reported shortages of teachers and the purported low-academic standing of students in the United

States in comparison to other countries, politicians began criticizing COEs for offering inadequate curriculum and insufficient training to teacher candidates (Gallagher & Bailey, 2000; see also, Weiner, 2000). They contended that programs lacked the content and credentials of an academic discipline (Gallagher & Bailey, 2000, p. 28). Questioning the curriculum later prompted concerns about the level of competence of graduates from traditional COEs.

Gallagher and Bailey (2000) reported that standards were established by the NCTAF to provide the public with indicators for caring, competent, and qualified teachers.

The commission settled on three of these potential indicators—indicators derived from the state license, the accreditation of the teacher education institution, and, later a national teaching certificate—to assure the public that the teacher is a competent, caring, and qualified person. (Gallagher and Bailey, 2000, p. 42)

Alternative teacher routes have become a viable option for many school districts because COEs have been criticized for their inability to prepare enough teachers to meet the staffing needs of U.S. schools and for their inability to prepare teachers of high quality (Zeichner, 2006).

As previously stated, ATP programs emerged from the public's growing concern of the ability of traditional COEs to provide high-quality teachers (Gallagher & Bailey, 2000; Labaree, 2004). Proponents of traditional teacher education programs felt that policies that allowed uncertified teachers to enter classrooms with little to no training could devastate the teaching profession (Laczko-Kerr & Berliner, 2002; Zeichner &

Schulte, 2001). Critics of ATP programs insisted that teacher candidates' lack of exposure to pedagogy, theory, and clinical experiences produced a cadre of ill-equipped teachers. Fast-tracking teachers through abbreviated preparation programs was posited as a disadvantage to teachers and a hindrance to students' progress (Darling-Hammond, 1994). Further, advocates of traditional COE programs claimed that ATP programs were demeaning the teaching profession by lowering standards for entry and producing ill-prepared teachers (Humphrey & Wechsler, 2007; Zeichner, 2006). Despite the criticism, urban schools began utilizing alternative routes to teaching as an additional means for filling badly needed staffing gaps.

Critics of traditional teacher education programs insisted on more alternative pathways to teaching since, in their opinion, COEs were not sufficiently providing a well-prepared teaching force (Zeichner, 2006). Proponents of ATP programs insisted that alternative routes would loosen stringent state certification requirements, easing entry into the teaching profession and classrooms. Furthermore, supporters of ATP programs felt that strong preparation in content knowledge was the catalyst for teacher success and that other competencies in teaching could be acquired on the job (Walsh & Jacobs, 2007). ATP programs were designed to attract talented, mature career changers to teach, thereby increasing the pool of qualified teaching applicants. Some abbreviated ATP programs, those that require less time than the typical 4-year COE program, were designed to immediately address teacher shortages in high-need subjects (math, science, and special education) and high-need geographic areas (rural and urban; Gallagher & Bailey, 2000; Humphrey & Wechsler, 2007; Weiner, 2000).

Research conducted by Berry, Montgomery, and Snyder (2008) on programs preparing teachers for urban school environments suggested that universities and ATP programs were facing varying challenges. The authors posited that universities have problems recruiting high-academic achievers and people of color, have limited accountability for candidate's effectiveness in teaching, and have limited opportunities for teacher candidates to have experiences with exemplary classroom teachers (p. 1). Berry, Montgomery, and Snyder stated that alternative pathways to teaching offer few opportunities for teacher candidates to learn how to teach due to the abbreviated curriculum, insufficient field experiences prior to placement in classrooms, and the lack of synchronization in teaching and learning content (p. 1).

Berry, Montgomery, and Snyder's (2008) work highlighted the success of the Boston Teacher Residency (BTR) program that prepares teachers specifically for high-need urban areas. The program has between 50 and 85 participants per year. The researchers reported that after 3 years of teaching, BTR program completers had a 90% retention rate. As they examined the challenges of high-needs schools, they also cited findings from a survey of renowned ATPs like Teach for America and traditional COE programs. According to survey results, traditionally prepared teachers felt more prepared in managing classrooms, constructing individualized learning, and assisting struggling students. Survey results also revealed that 34% of alternatively prepared teachers intended to leave their schools after 2 years, whereas only 4% of teachers trained in the traditional 4-year COE programs reported that they would leave. As they examined the challenges of high-need schools, Berry, Montgomery, and Snyder revealed that 34% of alternatively prepared teachers intended to leave those schools after 2 years, whereas only

4% of teachers trained in traditional 4-year COE programs reported that they would leave. Their research found that traditional COE program completers remained in the field of teaching at higher rates than their alternatively prepared counterparts. The researchers also recognized universities like UCLA and Stanford for preparing teachers for high-need areas. However, they contended that evidence is thin on the effectiveness of these programs in adequately preparing teachers. Their work highlighted the intended goals of UTRs and how IHEs may consider partnering with school districts to utilize UTRs as another viable pathway for recruiting and preparing teachers for high-need areas and subjects.

As traditional COEs have been criticized for not properly preparing teachers in general, they have been all the more pummeled for inadequately preparing individuals for the environments where they are most needed: hard-to-staff urban schools (Berry, 2005). Berry (2005) discussed the future of teacher education and the need for COEs to enhance their teacher education programs. His work recognized a need for preparing teachers for hard-to-staff urban schools, offered input on how the public can move beyond debates of alternative versus traditional teacher preparation, provided insight for reinforcing teacher education standards, and identified model programs that appeal to the needs of teachers working in diverse schools. Berry noted that only 50% of COE students graduate and that of those only 70% enter teaching. He insisted that the lack of preparation becomes much more evident when preparing teachers for urban school settings. “Teacher educators must recognize that the political resistance to their programs is built on the perception that teacher educators are not responsive to the academic and developmental needs of our nation’s most at-risk students” (p. 274).

Berry (2005) argued that of the nation's 1,200 university-based teacher education programs, very few have made fundamental changes to provide teacher candidates with the content and training needed to effectively work in urban school settings.

Furthermore, Roth and Tobin (2002) argued that "beginning and experienced teachers alike tell us time again that what they learn in their university courses or during the summer workshops for teacher enhancement has little to do with teaching praxis" (p. 108). They further contended that this dissonance is endemic in traditional teacher education programs.

There is disagreement among scholars about IHEs' efforts to prepare teachers for urban schools. Darling-Hammond (2006b) applauded the efforts of IHEs in meeting staffing challenges of urban schools. As previously discussed, she identified several college and university-based teacher preparation programs in the United States that have gained notable recognition for producing teachers who are well versed in teaching pedagogies and content knowledge and in constructing organized, well-managed classrooms. In her research, her team observed 1st-year teachers and interviewed them about their experiences. She posited that most 1st-year teachers have challenges with classroom discipline and merely try to survive the demands of teaching. However, graduates from the programs Darling-Hammond studied expressed that they felt very prepared for teaching and credited their preparation programs for their degree of comfort and readiness.

The beginning teachers we observed and interviewed would point to specific preparation experiences that enabled them to mature as teachers and surmount the dilemmas of teacher education. For example, candidates often described how

their extended clinical experiences, interwoven with coursework, helped them learn how to conceptualize teaching and enact their ideas in practice. (p. 44)

She also surveyed two groups of 1st-year teachers about their perceptions of preparedness. One group, which she referred to as the “research group,” was from the schools researched in her study and was composed of 551 participants. The other group of 420 participants was referred to as a “comparison group,” which was a random sample of teachers provided by the National Education Association. Survey results revealed that 86% of the teachers from the research group felt well prepared for teaching in comparison to 65% of the teachers from the comparison group. However, literature reveals that efforts of colleges and universities to provide the preparation needed for new teachers in urban areas have not been far reaching (Allen, 2003).

Some COEs have added or altered teacher preparation programs to meet the needs of diverse student populations. Johns Hopkins University created the Professional Immersion Masters of Arts in Teaching Program (ProMAT) as an ATP model (Masci & Stotko, 2006). The university worked in collaboration with Maryland Public Schools in response to increased urbanization and the needs of urban schools. Likewise, the University of California, Berkley’s Multicultural Urban Secondary English (MUSE) program enables participants to receive both teaching credentials and a master’s degree. One of the program’s goals is to provide “novice teachers with a theoretical framework for teaching in urban, multicultural settings” (Freedman & Appleman, 2009, p. 324).

Additionally, Indiana University Northwest established the Urban Teacher Education Program (UTEP) as an alternative route to teacher certification. The program’s creators sought to provide local urban school districts with “certified teachers



who could understand and motivate urban children and who would be likely to remain as teachers in these urban areas” (Schoon & Sandoval, 2000, p. 419). These are but a few of the IHEs that have recognized a need to develop ATP programs that serve the interests of urban schools. These programs and other university-based urban ATP programs will be discussed in greater detail later in this chapter and in Chapter 4.

There is no consensus about whether teachers coming from the traditional 4-year COE are ready for urban school environments (Chin, Young, & Floyd, 2004). Berry, Montgomery, and Snyder (2008) insisted that IHEs must make adjustments in their programs to address urban school needs:

If colleges and universities are going to remain relevant in teacher education reform, their administrators and faculty must be clearer about their conceptions of quality teaching and how they fit with the needs of the communities they serve. . . . More needs to be done to design frameworks for teaching in high-needs schools, with graduating teachers skilled in teaching specific subjects as well as working with second language and special needs learners and high-needs families. Universities should consider developing programs that endorse new teachers who have learned these skills and are prepared to lead. (p. 14)

Research suggests that ATP programs come in varying formats and are sponsored by a multitude of entities (Feistritzer, 2005). The USDOE reported that between 2000 and 2004, alternative route programs were administered as follows: approximately half by colleges and universities; 21% by school districts; 6% by regional educational services centers; 5% through state departments of education; and others from consortia and

different groups (Teacher Preparation section, 2006, p. 5). From 2003-2004, traditional teacher education programs from 1,096 institutions trained 81% of the teachers who completed programs (USDOE, 2006). Colleges and universities are still the leading producers of teachers, and there is still a need for including ATP as an additional pathway to teaching to meet urban school staffing needs (Berry, Montgomery, & Snyder, 2008; Humphrey, Wechsler, & Hough, 2008).

## **Urban Schools**

### **Characteristics of Urban Schools**

Foote (2005) explained that defining urban schools can be challenging since there are often similarities between urban and suburban areas based on socioeconomics, ethnicity, and culture. She stated that words such as “diverse, poor, or at-risk are often interchanged with urban when characterizing students” (Foote, 2005, p. 371) in urban schools. Although all urban schools are not exactly alike, some common phrases and words are often used to describe them. Urban schools are often characterized as having higher concentrations of students on free or reduced-priced meals, with low socioeconomic statuses, for whom English is a second language, who are minority, and who exhibit low-academic performance (Jacob, 2007).

Sachs (2004) described urban schools as those that are generally large, high density schools in metropolitan areas that serve a population subject to social, economic, and political disparities because of population mobility, diverse ethnic/cultural identity, low socioeconomic status, and/or limited language proficiency. (p. 178)

Roellke and Rice (as cited in Fowler's 2004 report on school financing) refer to large urban schools in the United States as those "serving high numbers of low-income, minority children" (p. 19). Jacob (2007) defined urban schools not only as those situated in large central cities, but also as schools that have high concentrations of immigrant children, receive federal funds specifically allocated to meet the needs of poor children, are located in cities with poor social capital (influential, supportive individuals who help the community), and are much larger than their rural or suburban counterparts.

The Council of the Great City Schools (2010)—a national organization representing 66 large city schools from districts such as New York, Milwaukee, Oakland, Houston, Palm Beach County, Detroit, Cincinnati, and Philadelphia—also provided a profile of students from urban schools. Their data revealed that of the 7.1 million students represented in the schools belonging to the council, 36% were African American; 35% were Hispanic; 21%, White; 6%, Asian/Pacific Islander; and 1%, Alaskan/Native American. Additionally, 61% of the students were eligible for free or reduced-priced meals, and 17% spoke English as a second language.

Moreover, Jacob (2007) revealed that in the 2003-2004 academic year, approximately 64% of students from the inner city were minority, with 56% receiving free or reduced-priced meals. Additionally, 40% of inner-city students were in schools supported by federal dollars targeted for poor children (p. 132). Borman and Dowling (2008) suggested that these demographics as well as school context may influence teachers' decisions regarding where they will teach, which may, consequently, exacerbate inequities in the distribution of teachers.

The research evidence has continued to suggest that poor and minority students have less access to qualified teachers than do more affluent and nonminority children. . . . A significant reason for these disparities is, in part, attributable to the fact that the greatest teacher attrition rates are found in those schools serving low-achieving, poor, and minority students. (Borman & Dowling, 2008, p. 398)

Jacob's (2007) research indicated that on average, urban students score lower on standardized achievement exams than their suburban counterparts. . . . Only 1 percent of fourth graders in central cities scored at the proficient level on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) math exam, compared with 27 percent in suburban schools. (p. 132)

As Jacob (2007) drafted a portrait of urban school environments, his work uncovered the difficulties of staffing urban schools. Efforts to raise student academic achievement are coupled with recruiting and retaining high-quality teachers, especially in those schools with the neediest children.

Lankford, Loeb, and Wyckoff (2002) investigated the distribution of teachers in New York State over a 15-year period to determine which schools had more underqualified teachers. Ultimately, "results show striking differences in the qualifications of teachers across schools. Urban schools, in particular, have lesser qualified teachers. . . . Low-income, low-achieving and nonwhite students, particularly those in urban areas find themselves in classes with many of the least skilled teachers" (p.

38). Less skilled teachers were identified as those graduating from less prestigious, competitive universities and lacking appropriate certification for their assignments.

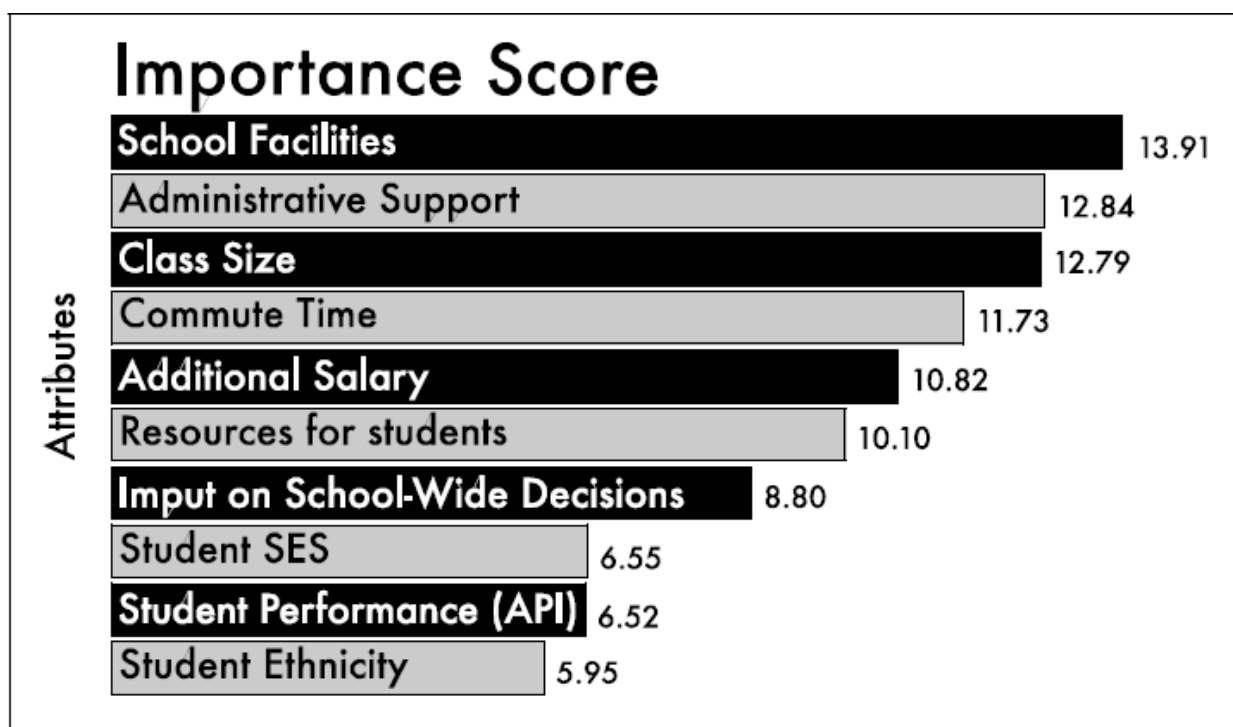
Some research about urban schools extends beyond student demographics, teacher credentialing, and teacher quality. Of importance are other components of urban schools such as per-pupil expenditures, facility structure and management, student-teacher ratios, and the availability of resources that influence teaching and learning in these environments. Jacob (2007) reflected on how the bureaucratic structure of urban districts can constrain their district leaders' desires to expeditiously address areas of concern. Jacob pointed out that eroding tax bases in urban areas make schools more dependent on external funding from state and federal agencies, which can be restricting. Additionally, he conveyed that urban schools are competing with private schools, more so than suburban schools, to keep their students and to maintain high-quality teachers. Lastly, Jacob mentioned that urban school districts often encounter high rates of mobility with students and that "when teachers are forced to accommodate an ever-changing set of students, this high mobility becomes disruptive not only for the 'movers' but also for stable students" (p. 132).

Furthering the discussion about urban school structures, Horng (2005) surveyed 547 general education teachers from a large urban elementary school district in California. The survey sample represented approximately 49% of all full-time teachers in the area. The survey was web-based and explored how different facets of urban schools influence teachers' decisions when considering employment. Of the ten attributes identified in Horng's research, the most important to teachers when making decisions about the schools in which they are likely to work were the maintenance of school

facilities, support provided by administrative staff, and class sizes. Horng reported that the ten attributes displayed in Figure 1 are more vital to teachers' employment decisions than the characteristics of their prospective students, as displayed in Figure 2.

Horng (2005) explained that the numbers in Figure 1 represent a utility value, which reflect the desirability expressed by teachers regarding certain attributes of urban schools; hence, the greater the number the more desirable the feature. She added that "teachers can be encouraged to stay at [traditionally hard-to-staff schools] by providing clean and safe school facilities, very good administrative support, small class sizes, sufficient resources for students, and opportunities to participate in school policy decision making" (p. 5). Horng ultimately contended that the results of this survey may reveal that the reasons for teacher departure from schools with low-income, high-minority, underachieving students are more closely correlated to the structural features of urban schools than student demographics.

Similar to Horng (2005), Buckley, Schneider, and Shang (2004) were interested in the impact school facilities had on teacher retention. Their work analyzed data from a 2002 survey of approximately 835 teachers in the Washington, DC, area that revealed that teachers may accept lower pay for school conditions that are conducive to teaching and learning. Their findings, like Horng's, revealed that a host of factors in addition to the physical structure of the building contributed to the grades teachers assigned to schools. Specifically, they reported that how schools manage student behavior, provide necessary resources such as textbooks, establish appropriate lighting and thermal comfort in classrooms, and control noise levels within the school can impact not only teachers' morale and retention but also students' ability to perform academically. For instance,



*Figure 1.* Ten attributes listed from most to least important and the average importance score for each attribute. Adapted from *Poor Working Conditions Make Urban Schools Hard-to-Staff*, by Eileen Horng, 2005, Berkeley, CA: University of California All Campus Consortium on Research for Diversity Policy Briefs, p. 3.

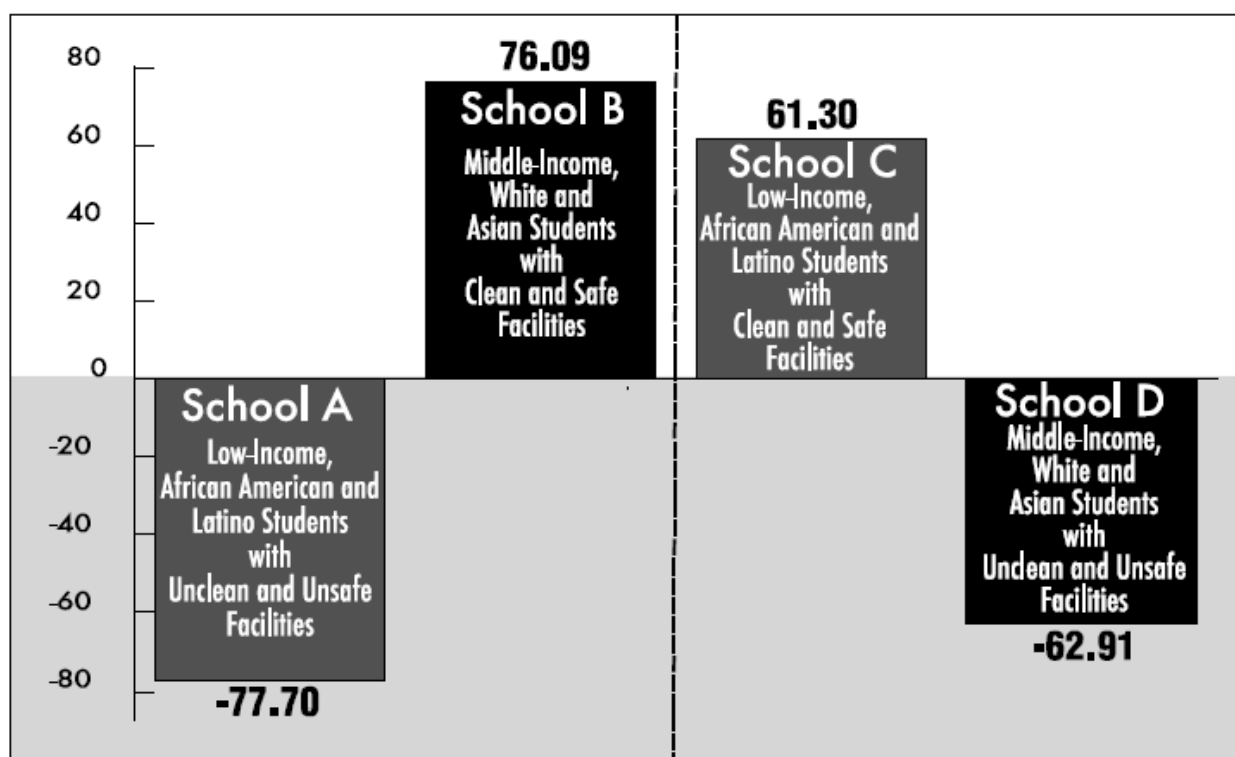


Figure 2. Hypothetical school profiles demonstrating that clean and safe school facilities are more important to teachers than student ethnicity and socioeconomic status. Adapted from *Poor Working Conditions Make Urban Schools Hard-to-Staff*, by Eileen Horng, 2005, Berkeley, CA: University of California All Campus Consortium on Research for Diversity Policy Briefs, p. 15.



they reported that of the 835 teachers surveyed, approximately 21% shared that they had inadequate lighting in their schools, and almost 70% reported that their “classrooms and hallways are so noisy that it affects their ability to teach” (p. 4).

“Sick building syndrome” (Buckley et al., 2004, p. 3) could be attributing to student absenteeism and low-academic performance. Buckeley et al. (2004) reported that many school buildings in urban areas of the United States are more than 40 years old, are rapidly deteriorating, and have poor indoor air quality. Poor air quality in the buildings was noted as problematic because of the impact it could have on the health of teachers and students. Buckley et al. suggested that increased wages for teachers may be just as likely to influence teacher retention as improving the quality of facilities. Further, they offered that

a major facilities improvement is likely to be a one-time expense, last for many years, and have supplemental sources of state or federal funding available. It could thus be [a] more cost-effective teacher retention strategy than a permanent salary increase for teachers in the medium- to long-term (p. 7).

### **Urban School Recruitment and Retention**

The shortage of teachers in the United States continues to present challenges for elementary and secondary schools. Departure from the profession includes retirees, but this group accounts for only a small portion of vacancies:

Between the end of the 1999-2000 and the beginning of the 2000-2001 school years, about 67,000 teachers retired, accounting for only 24 percent of the 278, 000 leavers and only 12 percent of the turnover of 546,000 during that period. (Ingersoll, 2004, p. 6)

Attracting individuals to the teaching profession has continued to present concerns.

Urban school systems in the United States continue to face challenges in recruiting and retaining quality teachers (Darling-Hammond & Baratz-Snowden, 2005; Epstein, 2008; Ingersoll, 2001, 2003; Inman & Marlow, 2004). In 2000, the NGA Center for Best Practices documented that

many public school students live in rural and urban areas; unfortunately, they face the greatest shortage of teachers—qualified or unqualified. . . .

Approximately 65 percent of school districts in high-poverty urban areas are forced to hire non-certified teachers or long-term substitutes for their classrooms. (Regional Differences Not a Zero Sum section, paras. 3, 4)

Retaining teachers beyond year 3 is a challenge for many districts, but as previously stated, this issue is much more pervasive in urban schools (Ingersoll, 2004; Ingersoll & Smith, 2003). For example, in 2000, the teacher turnover rate was 15% in all public schools in the state of New York as compared to 22% in urban schools (Jacob, 2007). In the same year, the Texas Center for Educational Research reported a 22% teacher turnover rate for urban, high-poverty schools in comparison to a 12.8% turnover rate for more affluent, low-poverty schools (Ingersoll, 2004). Lastly, Clotfelter, Ladd, Vigdor, and Wheeler (2007) conducted a study in North Carolina comparing teacher quality in high-poverty schools to those with more advantaged students. The results indicated that from 1996 to 2000 there was higher teacher turnover in high-poverty middle schools than in low-poverty middle schools.

Exploring the impact of salary and school/student characteristics on teachers' decisions to remain in the teaching profession, Hanushek, Kain, and Rivkin (2004)

asserted that student characteristics influence teachers' transition decisions. In fact, they stated that in Texas, public "schools serving large numbers of academically disadvantaged, black or Hispanic students tend to lose a substantial fraction of teachers each year both to other districts and out of the Texas public schools entirely" (p. 328). Some teachers in Texas who utilized intradistrict movement for alternative placements moved to schools with less economically and academically challenged students.

A longitudinal study of the retention of urban educators conducted by Quartz et al. (2004) considered the migration of teachers from schools with high poverty to those with less challenging situations.

Each year in the United States, more teachers leave the profession than enter. In 1999, for instance, 230,000 people entered teaching, yet nearly 290,000 left. And 250,000 more teachers moved or migrated from one school to another—usually away from "hard to staff" high-poverty schools. (p. 11)

These hard-to-staff schools continued to be confronted with high rates of turnover.

Sachs (2004) presented statistics concerning the problem of teacher attrition in urban schools stating that "urban districts lose nearly one half of their newly hired teachers within the first 5 years of service" (p. 177). Hence, these urban and high-poverty schools employed more teachers who were underqualified. Ingersoll (2004) posited that this is a trend that has continued throughout history (see also Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2002). However, as the gap in available resources between more advantaged populations and less advantaged populations shrinks, high-poverty school populations still continue struggling to recruit and retain qualified teachers. As a result of the

challenges urban schools face in finding qualified teachers, they have turned to alternative routes to teaching to fill staffing gaps (Legler, 2002; Zeichner & Schulte, 2001).

Attrition rates in urban high-poverty schools are symbolic of a revolving door of recruitment that continues to turn. Some studies document the turnover rates of urban teachers by considering their migration from hard-to-staff schools to less challenging school environments as well as their departure from the field altogether (Quartz et al., 2004). Ingersoll and Smith (2003) defined attrition and migration in teacher turnover: “Total teacher turnover is fairly evenly split between two components: *attrition* (those who leave teaching altogether); and *migration* (those who move to teaching jobs in other schools)” (p. 31). The reasons given for attrition included challenging, stressful working conditions, and a lack of resources. Stinebrickner’s (1998) research about the time teachers spent in the field of teaching before leaving the profession addressed the teacher-shortage argument, insisting that “enough teachers will always be found to staff U.S. schools, but that a realistic danger is that the pool of available teachers may become increasingly deficient in terms of overall quality or in certain subject areas” (p. 127).

### **Urban Teaching**

Snipes and Horwitz (2007) asserted that teacher quality is the most important resource for combating prevailing disparities in academic achievement and economic growth between different races of students in the United States. “Our urban classrooms have. . . become the frontlines in the war against poverty and inequality, and no single educational resource plays a more critical role in this fight than our urban teaching corps” (p. 1). Some attempts have been made by scholars to define the type of teachers more

inclined to be successful in urban schools (Gay, 2000; Sachs, 2004; see also Talbert-Johnson, 2006). Several variables were identified as characteristics of effective urban teachers, such as being more culturally aware and responsive to students' needs, possessing attitudes and beliefs that are more accepting of diverse students' needs, and exercising and embracing a sense of connectedness to students and the communities in which they live (Sachs, 2004).

Howey (1999) echoed sentiments similar to those previously mentioned, insisting that prospective urban teachers have experiences in urban schools and communities, maintain a repertoire of teaching skills, possess strong content knowledge, become aware of the societal conditions that may impact students at school, and receive appropriate support from teacher educators. To provide urban teachers with what they need, Howey posited that changes need to be made in program practices as well as with the staff who prepare teachers. Those who are preparing teachers should represent a cadre of individuals including those who are familiar with the social and cultural contexts that urban students may experience. Howey also asserted that COEs must work collaboratively with elementary and secondary schools to better prepare teachers.

Finally, Watson, Charner-Laird, Kilpatrick, Szczesiul, and Gordon (2006) conducted a study to determine how novice teachers define effective urban teaching. Their study consisted of 17 novice teachers who completed the same urban teacher preparation program. Watson et al.'s findings indicated that the majority of teachers viewed the word *urban* in racial terms (referring to Black or other non-White students); attended to students' needs based on stereotypes; did not think urban students valued education; thought that urban children lacked the behavior, beliefs, and values that were

characteristic of suburban children; and felt that urban students needed more guidance and help than suburban students.

Consequently, the study recommended that teacher education programs provide landscapes for prospective teachers that allow them to understand how beliefs about race, as well as their personal life experiences, can affect their teaching. To help teachers become more aware of race and urban contexts, Watson et al. (2006) posited that teacher preparation programs should train teachers in “antiracist, equitable pedagogies [and empower them to question] “discourses and systems that continually marginalize and demean students of color, thereby perpetuating inequity across the U.S. public school system” (p. 407). Further, these programs should create philosophies of learning that support changes in coursework and field experiences that can help prospective teachers unveil racist practices.

### **Principals’ Perceptions of Educational Reform Initiatives**

Vannest et al. (2009) posited that the perception of the positive or negative impact of educational policies is important in evaluating how policies and educational-reform initiatives are meeting the needs of their intended audience. Vannest et al. also reported that “perception of impact is not equal to the quantifiable effects of policy implementation but rather informs participants’ views of implementation and beliefs. These more subjective measures affect fidelity of implementation” (p. 148). Understanding how educational policy and educational-reform initiatives affect stakeholders is critical to this dissertation.

Further stressing the importance of stakeholder feedback, Grubbs (2009) conducted a program evaluation of a university-based ATP program. University leaders

(such as the university provost, COE dean, and department chair) wanted to confirm that their ATP program was effectively preparing candidates. Grubbs' work solicited feedback from several stakeholders including middle and secondary school principals.

Their roles as mentors to and employers of the [alternatively certified teacher] educators meant that they had a vested interest in ensuring that the program created qualified educators who were proficient both in terms of content mastery and pedagogy...especially true for those schools struggling to meet state and national accountability standards under No Child Left Behind. (Grubbs 2009, p. 583)

Her findings revealed that stakeholders felt that students from the university's ATP program were well prepared. Additionally, results showed that school-district personnel wanted better communication between the university and themselves.

Torff and Sessions (2005) emphasized what principals perceived as causes of teacher ineffectiveness. Their study included over 200 secondary school principals from both low- and high-performing schools. Torff and Sessions were exploring to what extent teacher ineffectiveness was related to content knowledge or pedagogical knowledge. They were especially interested in the outcomes of underperforming schools because some authors claimed that an overrepresentation of content-deficient teachers exists in low-performing urban schools. Finn (as cited in Torff and Sessions, 2005) posited that "children attending school in poor and urban areas are least likely to find themselves studying with teachers who engaged in deep study of their subjects" (p. 530).

According to Torff and Sessions (2005), principals' feedback was relevant to investigating teacher quality because principals observe the classroom performance of

teachers, review teachers' lesson plans, assess teachers' classroom management skills, gauge how well teachers develop rapport with children, and evaluate teachers' overall performance (both in the classroom and with respect to other school duties). Their work suggested that principals, who typically have been classroom teachers, acquire the skills to carry out the aforementioned tasks from educational programs and district training. In Torff and Session's findings, principals indicated that classroom-management skills, lesson-implementation skills, rapport with students, and lesson-planning skills are the most frequent causes of teacher ineffectiveness (2005, p. 534). Content knowledge was noted as the least cause of ineffectiveness, and pedagogical skills were stated as a main threat to teacher quality, thus resulting in ineffectiveness.

In most teacher-preparation programs, more coursework is devoted to content knowledge than pedagogical knowledge. Moreover, for many pre-service teachers, content-knowledge learning is unproblematic relative to the difficulties posed by pedagogical-knowledge learning, because the latter requires prospective teachers to acquire skills unlike their previous schooling or experience has encompassed. (Torff & Sessions, 2005, p. 525)

The recommendations from Torff and Sessions' (2009) work challenged teacher preparation program designers with providing more rigorous training for their prospective teachers in pedagogical skills, classroom management, rapport building with students, lesson-plan creation, and implementation of instruction. It is noteworthy that Torff and Sessions included counter arguments to using principals' views to evaluate the quality or ineffectiveness of teachers. They mentioned that some critics insisted that principals may



be inherently biased or subjective in their perceptions and judgments of teachers, compromising the validity and reliability of their feedback.

Finn (2009) conducted a study in the Dallas Independent School District that explored principals' perspectives of the professional development needs of teachers from both traditional and ATP programs. Principals from the Southeast Elementary and East Secondary Learning Communities in Dallas participated in the study. Specifically, Finn investigated whether the needs of 1st-year teachers in each group were alike or different. Additionally, Finn identified the areas of greatest difference among the 1st-year teachers as well as the areas of greatest need for 1st-year traditionally and alternatively prepared teachers. Responses from 82 principals and assistant principals revealed that both traditionally and alternatively prepared teachers were ineffective with classroom management. Survey results also indicated that both groups of 1st-year teachers were effective in developing lessons plans, meeting the needs of different learners, developing resources, and communicating effectively.

Finn's (2009) work also highlighted urban school administrators' struggles to find highly qualified teachers and how the tenets of NCLB sought to address this issue. Her work provided an overview of teacher preparation from the 1960s to the late 2000s. Likewise, Wagmeister (2006) conducted a study comparing the perceptions held by 1st-year traditionally prepared teachers to the perceptions of alternatively prepared teachers about their preparation. Wagmeister also investigated the perceptions principals had about the differences in each group's preparation. Nine public school administrators and six teachers were interviewed. Her study revealed that the principals suggested that traditionally trained teachers were more comfortable with their job responsibilities and

exhibited a better understanding in areas such as time management, pedagogy, special education procedures, and peer collaboration. Alternatively prepared teachers were perceived as being overwhelmed, shocked, and stressed by job duties and the diversity among students' academic abilities. As novices, alternatively prepared teachers had challenges with their new teaching responsibilities while taking college classes.

Wagmeister (2006) identified the need for increasing teacher quality and teacher quantity throughout the United States. The overwhelming representation of underprepared teachers in urban areas was also highlighted. Wagmeister contended that additional research is needed at IHEs. She also recommended that elements of successful preparation programs be explored.

### **University-Based ATP Programs for Urban Schools**

#### **Harvard Graduate School of Education, Teacher Education Program (TEP)**

ATP programs at the university level with a focus on urban teacher development are scant. However, a few universities are designing or redesigning alternative routes to teaching to address this shortcoming.

Harvard is one such university that has broadened the scope of its graduate teacher education program (TEP) to include an avenue specifically targeting urban school teacher development (Donaldson, 2009). The urban program accepts individuals who are college graduates, liberal arts majors, "mid-career humanities candidates," (Donaldson, 2009, p. 367) and professionals in math and science who want to become teachers. Harvard's TEP courses were structured around the development of adolescents in urban environments as well as issues related to urban schools. The aim of the program was to create "an urban-focused teacher education program that sought to attract high-achieving

candidates and equip them with the dispositions and skills that would allow them to flourish in city schools” (p. 351).

Exploring the need to provide urban schools with quality teachers who would want to remain in those settings, Donaldson (2009) investigated factors that influenced teachers’ decisions to stay in urban schools. Reasons affecting urban teachers’ career decisions were gathered from 636 respondents—cohorts in Harvard’s urban teacher preparation program—and compared to those cohorts who did not have urban teacher preparation. Donaldson proposed that teachers from the urban-focused programs would be more likely to stay in urban schools in comparison to other cohorts.

Results from Donaldson’s (2009) study revealed that graduates who attended the urban-focused programs were no more likely to stay and just as likely to leave as their counterparts who had no urban teacher preparation. Underpreparation was noted as a reason that urban program graduates departed from urban schools. Cohort members from the urban-focused program indicated that they were surprisingly less prepared than expected. According to an urban-focused program graduate, “Harvard needs to prepare people much better with a more practical methods base. Contrary to what profs taught us, classroom management CAN be taught!” (Donaldson, p. 360). Another cohort member declared, “I realized that I was not quite ready for the rigors of that type of school. . . . I don’t think I was prepared for all the non-content related aspects of teaching in large urban schools (Donaldson, p. 360).

Other possible influences on teachers’ decisions to depart from urban schools included the lack of community support (parents) and dissonance between teachers and the school community. Harvard’s TEP teachers were predominantly White and upper-

middle class, and the urban communities were often made up of low-income people of color. Increased collaboration between urban schools and the universities serving those schools was encouraged.

### **University of California, Los Angeles, Center X, TEP**

In 1995, the University of California, Los Angeles created Center X, an ATP program designed to meet the staffing needs of urban schools (Quartz & TEP Research Group, 2003). The authors sought evidence of “those elements of preparation and support that may be efficacious in remedying urban schools’ ‘revolving door’” (p. 100). Center X is a 2-year program allowing candidates to receive both state certification and a master’s degree. Upon completion of the program, teachers become a part of an Urban Educator Network, which provides additional support for urban teachers. Quartz and TEP Research Group’s (2003) study showed that 70% of Center X graduates remain in urban schools after 5 years, which is higher than the national average for beginning teachers (61%).

Center X program participants have field experiences in urban schools and also work with community groups to address issues relevant to their respective communities. Center X’s faculty, teachers, and graduates identify themselves as a community for social justice. Faculty use critical theory to enrich learning experiences for students who will teach in urban schools. Quartz and TEP Research Group (2003) noted that critical theory allowed the participants to problematize “commonly accepted beliefs and practices surrounding ability, race, class, gender, language, differences, and so on” (p. 102). Ultimately, the researchers wanted to explore the reasons that Center X graduates decided to leave or stay in urban schools.

The sample population consisted of 326 graduates involving 2,000 phone interviews and 2,001 surveys between 1997 and 2000. The 3-year attrition rate for Center X teachers was revealed as 10%, which was below the national average of 29%. Some Center X graduates began serving as mentors for new teachers and student teachers. The graduates introduced the concept of social justice in their schools and engaged other teachers in conversations about race, which prompted curriculum changes. Program leaders expressed that Center X's commitment to ongoing professional support for teachers' continuous development and learning contributed to its graduates' high-retention rates.

### **Johns Hopkins University, Professional Immersion Master of Arts in Teaching (ProMAT)**

The Professional Immersion Master of Arts in Teaching (ProMAT) program is a 2-year ATP partnership program between Johns Hopkins University and Maryland Public Schools (Masci & Stotko, 2006). The program allows candidates to receive state credentialing as well as a master's degree. Tuition assistance is provided for participants by the school district in return for their employment after completion of the ProMAT program. Masci and Stotko (2006) identified the need for increasing and retaining qualified teachers. They supported ATP programs to address teacher shortages. However, they posited that many alternative routes to teaching were compromising the quality and preparation of teachers by not providing comprehensive training before novices entered classrooms. They insisted that ATP programs should be modeled after "high quality, academically rigorous" (Masci & Stotko, 2006, p. 49) teacher education programs; this is the case for the ProMAT program.

The ProMAT program requires students to complete 39 credits, with heightened sensitivity to multicultural awareness and diversity.

One of the major purposes of the ProMAT Program is retention of interns in the district's urbanized schools. The ProMAT Program requires its candidates to remain in the school system, at the same school whenever possible, for three years on issuance of contract. (Masci & Stotko, 2006, p. 50)

Students participate in student teaching internships within Year 1 of the program and obtain a job in one of the district's urban schools in Year 2.

Masci and Stotko (2006) conducted research to evaluate the preparation of teachers who completed the ProMAT program. Exit-survey responses from approximately 100 ProMAT graduates were analyzed to determine their satisfaction with the program. Graduates assessed the effectiveness of their ProMAT experiences based on "selection procedures, field experiences, additional training, course instructors, course content, field experience placements, summer school internship placement, full-year teaching fellowship assignment, program organization, and supervisory support" (Masci & Stotko, 2006, p. 56). Candidates were also asked if they would refer others to the program. Survey results illustrated participants' overall satisfaction with the nine domains mentioned above. Masci and Stotko added that the ProMAT program meets high-quality standards of alternative preparation as cited in the literature by having a rigorous selection process, high-entry requirements, comprehensive coursework, program completers who pass state exams, and an extensive interview and screening process.

### **University of California Berkley, Multicultural Urban Secondary English (MUSE)**

Responding to the need for a “durable urban teaching corp” (Freedman & Appleman, 2009, p. 323), the University of California Berkley established the Multicultural Urban Secondary English (MUSE) program. The program offers teacher credentialing and a master’s degree. It was designed to develop teachers who could teach in high-poverty, urban schools. Freedman and Appleman (2009) identified the goals of MUSE:

- (a) to provide novice teachers with a theoretical foundation for teaching in urban, multicultural settings, particularly focusing on social justice, cross-cultural communications and adolescent development, and
- (b) to support novice teachers in learning the art and craft of teaching in these settings, particularly focusing on developing curriculum for teaching reading, writing, and literature and on understanding the needs of all . . . learners and speakers of varied, nonschooled dialects of English. (p. 324)

Therefore, coursework, field placements, and seminars were designed by MUSE faculty with emphasis on urban teaching and English language learners.

Freeman and Appleman (2009) followed a MUSE cohort of 26 secondary English teachers from Year 1 of teaching to Year 5, examining why the teachers chose to stay or leave high-poverty schools. Through a mixed methods approach, they compared retention statistics of MUSE teachers to statistics of teachers from national samples and comparable programs. They also interviewed MUSE graduates who were in Years 4 or 5 of teaching to explore why they remained in or left high-poverty, urban schools. Their data revealed that after teaching for 1 year, 92% of MUSE teachers were still teaching in

the same urban schools. After 5 years, 73% were still teaching, mostly in urban schools, whereas only 54% of 5th-year teachers remained in teaching nationally.

Lastly, Freeman and Appleman (2009) concluded that MUSE was doing well at preparing teachers for the realities in urban schools. Program leaders infused urban education throughout participants' experiences.

This focus helped to create a framework for urban education, where it became the context of their teaching rather than a "problem" to be solved, where students were not seen as the "problem" but as the reason for the teachers' commitments. (Freeman & Appleman, 2009, p. 334)

They further suggested that the coordinated efforts to merge theory with practice provided program participants with a rich context for urban teaching.

### **Indiana University Northwest, Urban Teacher Education Program (UTEP)**

To address teacher shortages in three urban school districts, Indiana University Northwest partnered with school districts to establish the Urban Teacher Education Program (UTEP). An ATP program, UTEP was initially designed for urban teachers holding emergency licenses from the state. These teachers were considered subject-specialists who did not have original aspirations for entering teaching. UTEP later evolved into a 19-month ATP program that allowed participants to receive state certification and possibly a master's degree (Schoon & Sandoval, 2000). Prior to acceptance, individuals had to possess a bachelor's degree, have a grade point average of at least 2.5, have taken several content related courses, and have passed state required tests. The program was committed to increasing pedagogical skills and the knowledge of



individuals who progress through alternative teaching pathways, since they often arrive in classrooms with little to no knowledge about teaching.

Schoon and Sandoval's (2000) review of UTEP identified changes in its design from Year 1 to Year 3. As the program continued to help students develop a context for urban teaching, its courses were revised. Class offerings included "Methods of Teaching in Urban Schools, Psychology of Teaching (requiring students to work with a community agency serving the needs of youth), and The School in the Multicultural Urban Community" (Schoon & Sandoval, 2000, p. 428). Students teaching in secondary schools were required to take classes in the summer and throughout the year while also attending meetings with school and university supervisors. A supervised practicum, using the teacher's current classroom for the field experience, was required. Additionally, weekly reflection seminars were held for students to share experiences with and to receive feedback from supervising teachers and university faculty. The program further expanded, accepting long-term substitutes and conventional graduate students. The students would eventually complete a total of 21 credits of graduate-level work.

Schoon and Sandoval (2000) interviewed and surveyed program participants, university faculty, and secondary school principals and mentors. The surveys and interview protocols provided feedback on the

relationship between the university and school partners, beliefs about program effectiveness, participants' satisfaction with field experiences and coursework, faculty and school administrators' perceptions of student preparation, and recommendations for changes. (Schoon & Sandoval (2000, p. 423)

Results from their study revealed that stakeholders considered the program a success in preparing teachers for urban schools. The program continued to grow and accept more candidates, purportedly creating a well-prepared cadre of teachers for participating urban schools.

### **Urban ATP Programs Overview and Aspects of Effective Programs**

The university-based ATP programs that were included in the review of literature have some common threads. Their missions, goals, or philosophy centered on recruiting and preparing teachers for underserved minority student populations in urban areas. The programs offer support to newcomers and emphasize the importance of establishing a theoretical foundation focused on the needs of urban school children. The research suggests that teacher retention may be influenced by teacher preparation since some programs indicate that teacher-retention rates are higher in urban school areas for those teachers who attended a program specifically for urban teacher development (Berry, Montgomery, & Snyder, 2008).

Darling-Hammond's (2006b) research on the seven effective teacher education programs previously mentioned identified common components among the programs' features. Some of the features are reflected in the previous discussion about university-based ATP programs in Chapter 2 and are evident in the expectations of elementary school principals covered in Chapter 4. The common characteristics of effective teacher education programs described by Darling-Hammond include the following:

- A common, clear vision of good teaching permeates all coursework and clinical experiences.

- Well-defined standards of practice and performance are used to guide and evaluate coursework and clinical work.
- Curriculum is grounded in knowledge of child and adolescent development, learning, social contexts, and subject matter pedagogy, taught in the context of practice.
- Extended clinical experiences are carefully developed to support ideas and practices presented in simultaneous, closely interwoven coursework.
- Explicit strategies help students (1) confront their own deep-seated beliefs and assumptions about learning and students and (2) learn about the experiences of people different from themselves.
- Strong relationships, common knowledge, and shared beliefs link school- and university-based faculty.
- Case study methods, teacher research, performance assessments, and portfolio evaluation apply learning to real problems of practice. (p. 41)

Humphrey et al. (2008) conducted a study to explore the characteristics of effective ATP programs. Using purposive sampling, they identified seven ATP programs that ranged from school-district-sponsored programs to state-sponsored programs to regional-educational service centers across the United States. Each of the seven sites was considered a case study. In addition to analyzing documents such as program descriptions, evaluations, and course syllabi, interviews with program faculty (directors, teachers, certification advisors, and classroom supervisors) were conducted during the 2003-2004 academic year. Program participants were also surveyed upon entry to their

programs and at the completion of their 1st year of teaching. Approximately 10 to 13 program participants were monitored at each alternative program.

Humphrey et al. (2008) asserted that effective alternative teacher certification programs take careful steps to

1. Place candidates in school settings that feature strong leadership, a collegial atmosphere, and adequate supplies and materials.
2. Select well-educated individuals or take steps to strengthen candidates' subject matter knowledge, and recognize that previous classroom experience is an advantage.
3. Provide carefully constructed and timely coursework that is tailored to the candidate's backgrounds and the challenges that candidates will face in their schools.
4. Provide each candidate with a trained mentor who is given the time and resources to work with the candidate to plan lessons, share curriculum ideas, demonstrate lessons, and provide feedback after frequent classroom observations.
5. Assess each participant's teaching skills, knowledge and performance at critical junctures, beginning with their selection and continuing throughout their training.
6. Collect data on their participants through multiple methods (assessments, portfolios of teacher assignments and student work, observations, and interviews). (p. 38)

The program components mentioned by Darling-Hammond (2006b) as well as by Humphrey et al. (2008) are considered significant to the work of university-based ATPs as evidenced in the results and findings sections of this research.

### **Alternative Teacher Preparation (ATP)**

#### **The Alternative Preparation Movement**

In response to the increasing demand for teachers, alternative preparation and certification routes emerged. The alternative preparation movement occurred in the 1970s and led to emergency certificates being issued by states. These certificates were issued to individuals “with no formal preparation and, more often than state officials would have liked to admit, to individuals lacking any college degree” (Walsh & Jacobs, 2007, p. 16). In fact, Walsh and Jacobs’ report, published by the Fordham Foundation, suggested that for many years and with much success, private schools have been employing uncertified teachers with strong educational backgrounds.

The state of New Jersey established the first alternative certification program in 1983 entitled the Provisional Teacher Program. Some researchers deemed the program effective (Legler, 2002; Walsh & Jacobs, 2007). Before long, Texas created its own program, followed by many other states that sought to expand their pool of teachers. The alternative-certification movement gained momentum in the 1980s (Zeichner & Schulte, 2001). Teacher education programs were deemed ineffectual and too extensive in their attempts to train teachers. Hence, this opened the door for individuals, agencies, and corporate entities to profess their abilities to train teachers in shorter periods and equip them with the necessary skills to do as good a job (if not better) as those traditionally prepared at a college. During the 1980s policymakers also considered alternative routes

an opportunity to broaden the talent pool of teachers, and today, they think that these routes increase the number of minorities entering the profession (Legler, 2002).

Later in 2004, the New York City Teaching Fellows Program was established. Responding to the shortage of teachers in New York, particularly in certain fields, the New York Board of Regents approved an alternative certification route to lure college graduates into hard-to-fill positions and schools. Graduates with subject content knowledge who met certain criteria were eligible for positions in math, science, and special education. The Teaching Fellows program in New York garnered 2,500 new teachers for New York City schools (Boyd, Grossman, Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2006).

The alternative certification movement gave rise to various programs sponsored by school systems, universities, and public organizations (nonprofit or for-profit). In fact, the National Center for Alternative Certification (2009) reported findings from the National Center for Educational Information (NCEI) that indicated that the number of teachers that had been certified in the United States through alternative routes increased substantially after 1990. NCEI estimated that approximately 59,000 individuals were issued teaching certificates through alternative routes during the 2005-06 school year, up from approximately 50,000 in 2004-05 school year and 39,000 in the 2003-04 school year. Additionally, data from 2007 revealed that some sort of ATP route existed in all 50 states and in Washington DC, an exponential increase from the 1980s when only eight states housed alternative routes.

Alternative routes to teaching account for one third of new teachers hired in the United States. It is not surprising that alternative routes to teaching have grown because

program providers receive federal funding. Support for ATP is provided by NCLB: “Title II of NCLB allows funds to be used ‘carrying out programs that establish, expand, or improve routes for state certification of teachers,’ as well as for ‘reforming teacher certification (including recertification) or licensing requirements’” (Constantine et al., 2009, p. xvi).

The earlier works of Lortie (1975) presented an argument challenging the ease of entrance into teaching provided through ATP programs.

During the sacred era, it was easier to teach than to preach; since the advent of secularization and the emphasis on professionalization, teaching has presented fewer obstacles than professions or some would-be professions. . . . Society, it seems, has preferred to get teachers by easing access rather than by offering higher rewards. (Lortie, 1975, p. 23)

Similarly, Grissmer and Kirby (1997) discussing teacher quality stated that

in any profession, the process of ensuring the quality of professionals is fairly simple. It involves setting high standards for entrance into training in the field and a fairly demanding course of study with periods of testing and apprenticeship prior to full-fledged acceptance. (p. 53)

Most states have some alternate route to teacher certification. These alternate routes are offered by school systems, universities, and public organizations (both nonprofit and for profit). Programs vary from one region to the next and from one university, district, and company to the next. Regardless of individual processes and recruitment efforts of ATP programs, critics and schools of education are unsure if their participants possess the prowess needed to be effective in the classroom. Called into

question is whether alternatively certified teachers (ACTs) are properly trained to assume the responsibilities of a classroom, and more specifically, the classrooms of some of our most needy children (Darling-Hammond, 1994; Ladson-Billings, 2000).

### **Defining ATP**

ATP assumes various definitions partly because there are a number of programs throughout the United States that vary in design. Because of the massive numbers of programs, the lines describing ATP often appeared blurred, so terms describing ATP programs are used interchangeably (Feistritzer, 2005). The *Profile of Alternative Route Teachers* published in 2005 by the National Center for Education Information (NCEI) stated that

The term, “alternate route” refers to a state’s guidelines or provisions for alternative paths to teacher certification other than the traditional college-based teacher education program routes to certification. An “alternate route program” refers to the actual program as implemented by a state provider. (Feistritzer, 2005, p. 2)

A 45-item survey administered by NCEI in 2005 revealed that of the 2,647 participants, most of the alternatively prepared teachers were between the ages of 18 and 29, 68% were white, and over 50% had a bachelor’s degree outside of the field of education. Additionally, 50% worked in large cities, and only 10% worked in suburban regions. Many states reported that over 80% of their teachers remained after 5 years.

Additionally, the *Innovations in Education: Alternative Routes to Teacher Certification* report published in 2004 by the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Innovation and Improvement reported that



across this land, states, school districts, nonprofit groups, and now even schools of education are creating alternative pathways into the teaching profession. These “alternative route” programs vary tremendously, but the best ones recruit widely, select only the very best candidates, provide intensive training, and support their teachers regularly for several years once they are in the classroom. And they are showing great promise. (p. v)

Some ATP programs accept candidates who have not taught in the classroom and who have not taken education courses. Candidates may choose from several program structures including summer internships (teaching, observing, and attending workshops), 1-year residencies, and a master of arts in teaching (National Association for Alternative Certification, 2009; National Center for Alternative Certification, 2009). Darling-Hammond and Sykes (2003) posited that ATP programs that are highly selective about their candidates, infuse a strong mentoring component, provide intensive student-teaching experiences, and design-targeted preparation delivery are likely to produce candidates who feel prepared for the classroom and are confident in their ability to teach. Teachers who feel more efficacious about teaching are likely to remain in the profession. Opponents of alternative preparation feel that reduced preparation is void of critical components that new teachers must be exposed to in order to be successful at teaching children and managing classrooms.

## **Teacher Preparation**

### **Traditional Teacher Preparation Program Statistics and Features**

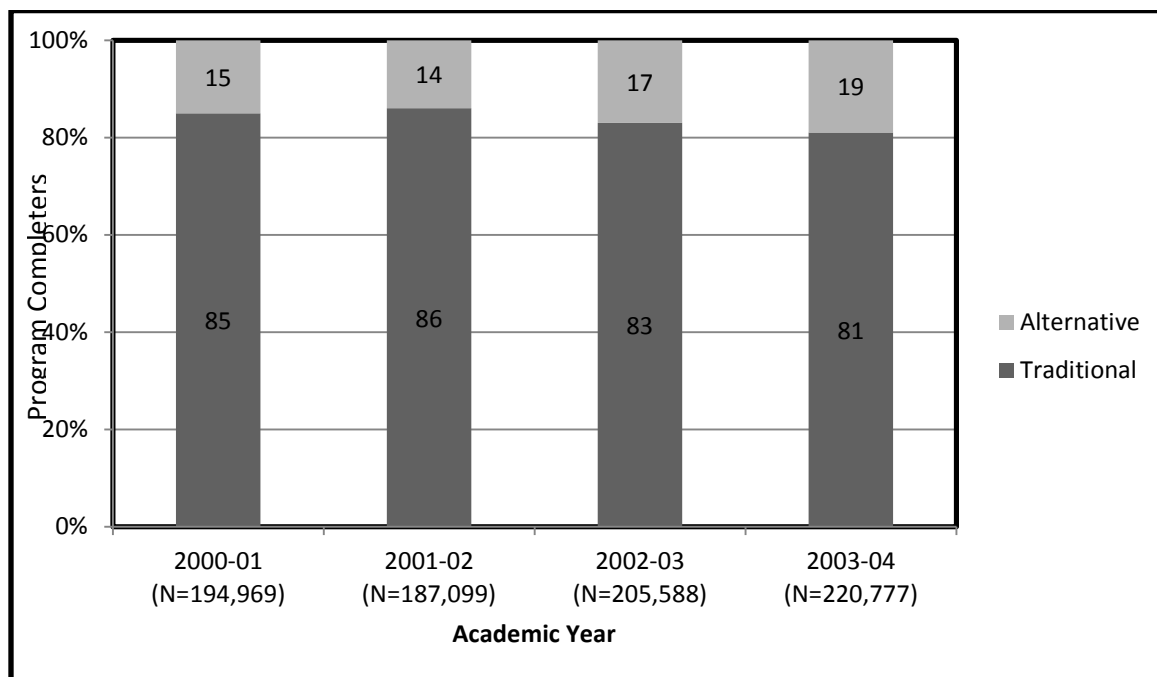
Traditional teacher education programs are typically 4-year undergraduate programs offered by colleges and universities (USDOE, 2006). *The Secretary's Fifth Annual Report on Teacher Quality* stated that the majority of teachers are still prepared through traditional routes, with over 170,000 completers during the 2003-2004 academic year (USDOE, 2006). Figures 3 and 4 from the USDOE's (2006) report illustrate the overwhelming number of traditional program completers as compared to alternative routes completers between the 2000-2001 and 2003-2004 academic years.

A. Levine's 2006 report also provided figures confirming that an overwhelming number of teachers progress through 4-year college or university programs but at various degree levels:

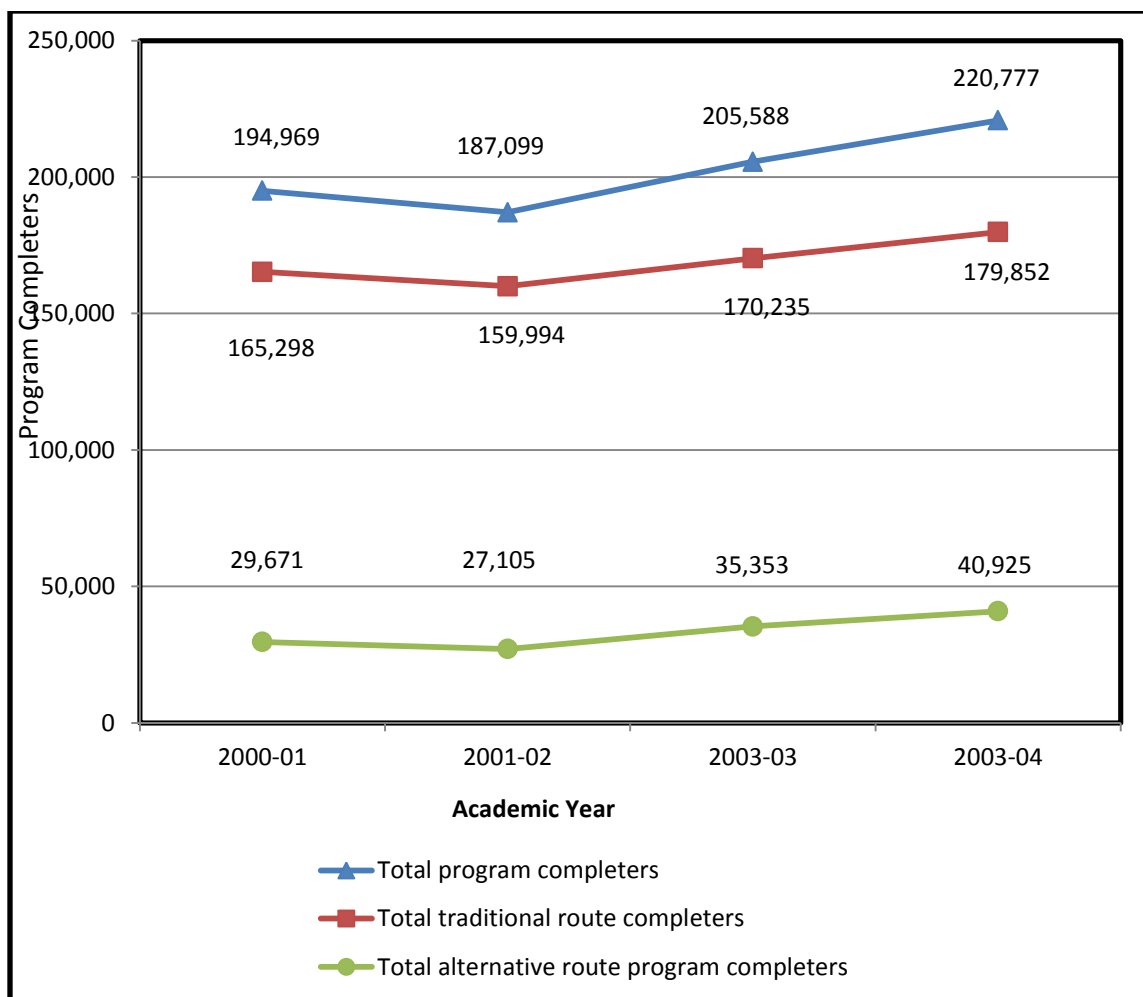
For those preparing for a profession, pre-service teacher education generally takes place in one of nearly 1,200 colleges and universities, found at 78 percent of the nation's four-year schools. In 2002-03, these programs produced almost 106,000 teacher education baccalaureate degrees, more than 64,000 master's degrees, nearly 1,000 doctoral degrees, and over 4,000 certificates in teacher education.

(p. 15)

A. Levine (2006) also identified the number of schools of education that existed at the bachelor's, master's and doctorate levels. According to his study, there were 401 schools of education in baccalaureate-granting institutions, 562 schools of education in master's-granting institutions (approximately half of these students are prepared as



*Figure 3. Percentage of Alternative Versus Traditional Program Completers. Adapted from The Secretary's Fifth Annual Report on Teacher Quality: A Highly Qualified Teacher in Every Classroom by the U.S. Department of Education, 2006, Washington, DC, p. 7*



*Figure 4. Number of Completers Who Attended Alternative Versus Traditional Programs. Adapted from The Secretary's Fifth Annual Report on Teacher Quality: A Highly Qualified Teacher in Every Classroom by the U.S. Department of Education, 2006, Washington, DC, p. 11.*

undergraduates), and 228 schools of education in doctorate-granting institutions (conferring 92% of the doctorates granted to individuals in the field of education).

Zeichner and Paige (2007) defined programs that required their candidates to complete the majority, if not all, coursework prior to clinical experiences as traditional programs. Based on their definition, the following are symbolic of traditional programs: 5-year extended programs leading to the completion of both bachelor's and master's degrees, a 5-year bachelor's program leading to teacher certification, or a 6-year master's program.

Zeichner and Paige (2007) stressed, however, that the infrastructure of these models can vary among colleges and universities. They stated that a common feature of many colleges and universities in the United States is that they include Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) standards in their programs' framework. According to their research, college and university admission requirements do not account for personal attributes that may predict the future success of individuals in teaching. Many of the programs require rigorous coursework and student-teaching experiences (from one semester to a full academic year). Traditional programs often include courses that provide prospective teachers with skills in content development, pedagogy, assessment, and theory (Zeichner, 2006; Zeichner & Paige, 2007). During the student-teaching practicum, a school-based mentor supervises the student's performance and provides support to enhance training, and a university supervisor typically conducts site visits during the internship. Overall, Zeichner and Paige depicted typical structures and components of traditional teacher education programs; however, their findings were not exhaustive.

## **Preparing Teachers to Teach**

Schools of education are preparing the overwhelming majority of U.S. teachers, and Labaree (2004) offered further insight into the conundrum of teacher preparation within these schools. Although his work is not an argument for ATP, it includes a critique of teacher educators and schools of education. His findings appear to provide insight for both supporters and opponents of ATP.

He stated that many people have a misconception that teaching is relatively easy and therefore think, as proponents of alternative preparation have suggested, that subject-matter knowledge is enough to qualify one to teach. However, he added,

The special expertise of teachers is not the subject matter of the curriculum but the capacity to teach others how to learn this subject matter. And by extension, the special expertise of teacher educators is not disciplinary knowledge but the capacity to teach others how to teach this knowledge effectively. (Labaree, 2004, p. 60)

Labaree (2004) also suggested that the goal of teacher education programs is to help teaching candidates realize that teaching is not simply intuitive or imitative and cannot be based merely on a teacher candidate's personal characteristics or observations of teaching. If students' own natural abilities and personal characteristics alone were enough to succeed in teaching then, he contended, teacher preparation programs would not be necessary. Labaree described teaching as complex, analytical, and strategic, requiring both pedagogical skills and academic knowledge. The challenge that schools of education face, Labaree said, is that "they run into enormous resistance from teacher candidates who don't think they need this kind of professional education" (p. 58). This

resistance appears to provide support for abridged teacher preparation models that reduce or otherwise alter the coursework required of teachers prior to entering a classroom.

Additionally, Darling-Hammond and Baratz-Snowden's (2005) work on choosing and preparing good teachers implied that effective teaching extends beyond basic content knowledge. They emphasized four things that beginning teachers must understand: the constructive nature of knowing, cognitive processing, metacognition, and motivation. These four areas involve connecting students' experience to learning, understanding how students process and organize information, and engaging students in learning experiences. From the research, both proponents and critics of ATP agreed that content knowledge is critical. However, no consensus has been reached regarding the amount of other training teachers need prior to entering the classroom. In their 2002 press release, USDOE, supporting proponents of ATP, asserted that

there is no evidence that lengthy preparation programs achieve [their] goals any better than streamlined programs that quickly get talented teachers into the classroom. . . . Requiring excessive numbers of pedagogy or education theory courses acts as an unnecessary barrier for those wishing to pursue a teaching career. (para. 5)

Many alternatively prepared teachers work in high-need schools. Therefore, understanding how their preparation is readying them for these environments is important. Urban teacher residencies provide training for teacher candidates who are specifically interested in working in urban schools. According to the work composed by Berry, Montgomery, Curtis, et al. (2008),

All teachers—but particularly those who teach in high-needs urban schools—need deep subject matter knowledge, understanding of how students learn and how to assess their learning, skills to work with special needs and second language learners, ability to engage and motivate diverse students, and strategies to reach families. (p. 8)

Berry, Montgomery, Curtis et al. (2008) acknowledged the efforts of universities and alternative teacher pathways to bolster teacher preparation prior to entering the classroom. They indicated that PDSs (partnerships between universities and school districts) were offering more extensive clinical experiences for some university students. The authors contended that the clinical experiences were advantageous to meeting the specific needs of schools or districts. Additionally, they credited well-designed ATP programs with increasing the quality of their candidates by requiring them to meet higher standards before becoming the teacher of record. Further, they asserted that urban teacher residencies address the preparation deficiencies of many traditional and ATP programs. Those deficiencies include limited clinical experiences, inadequate opportunities to merge theory and practice (learning and teaching), and an abridged curriculum that lacks instruction on how to teach diverse students (Berry, Montgomery, Curtis et al., 2008).

### **Summary of the Review of Literature**

The literature highlights challenges urban schools have faced with recruiting and maintaining high-quality teachers (NCTAF, 2003). It also revealed that since the 1960s, national educational-reform initiatives have earmarked assistance to improve the distribution of quality teachers in low-income, high-minority schools (USDOE, 2009).



ATP has created avenues for career switchers and noneducation majors to pursue teaching. ATP programs have been recognized as a reliable method for increasing the teaching workforce and attracting highly talented individuals to the field, consequently filling staffing gaps in urban schools (Walsh & Jacobs, 2007; Zeichner, 2006).

When teachers enter the workforce, if they have options to determine where they want to work (an urban or suburban school), many of them may select suburban schools with fewer academically challenged minority students. According to the data, many teachers who accept jobs in hard-to-staff urban schools migrate to suburban schools with low-poverty levels, few children of color, and mid- to high-socioeconomic student populations (Ingersoll, 2004). Therefore, urban schools maintain high levels of teachers lacking full teaching credentials.

Teachers were identified as one of the most valuable educational resources for improving the educational outcomes and economic growth of disadvantaged children in the United States (NCTAF, 1996; see also Darling-Hammond & Baratz-Snowden, 2005; Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 1999; Donaldson, 2009). The quality of teachers is noted as having a significant impact on students' academic success, and urban schools are in need of these teachers. Identifying how to increase the number of teachers in urban schools is of concern.

With the proliferation of ATP programs, traditional schools of education were among many establishments who developed programs in this arena. According to Walsh and Jacobs' (2007) research, colleges and universities have become leaders in ATP programs: "Alternative certification has been co-opted. . . . Education schools—

brilliantly turning a threat into an opportunity—have themselves come to dominate this enterprise” (p. 9).

Some colleges and universities have established ATP programs to address teacher shortages and increase the number of eligible high-quality teachers for urban schools (Darling-Hammond 2006a). Many of the colleges form partnerships with neighboring school districts that serve as sites for student internships and future employment. The evaluation of university-based ATP programs is necessary to determine if the programs are meeting their intended goals. Additionally, program leaders must engage the voices of stakeholders to ensure that their intended goals also meet the staffing needs of hard-to-staff urban schools (Vannest et al., 2009). The review of literature has described a landscape of the staffing needs of urban schools and how ATP programs at urban universities are attempting to ameliorate the unequal distribution of well-prepared high-quality teachers.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study is to explore how Title I elementary school principals perceive staffing challenges of schools in urban areas and how university-based ATP programs are preparing teachers for urban environments. As previously referenced, very few urban universities have established ATP programs to address the staffing needs of urban schools (Allen, 2003). As more universities concentrate efforts to provide ATP programs that have an urban focus, the voices of participants and principals add value to program evaluations (Torff & Session, 2005; Voltz, 1999). The overarching interest in this study is to examine how principals assess Title I school staffing challenges and how the work of some universities may have an impact on urban teacher preparation.

This chapter presents the methodology and procedures that were used for examining how Title I urban elementary school principals perceive the preparation needed for prospective teachers and provided by university-based urban ATP programs. This chapter will present the methodological rationale, research design, research questions, research setting, selection of participants, data collection, data analysis, ethical considerations, researcher's role, and interpretation of findings.

#### **Methodological Rationale**

A qualitative research approach was used in this study to investigate the perceptions held by Title I urban elementary school principals concerning the preparation teachers receive and need from university-based urban ATP programs. Qualitative

methodology allows researchers to “make an interpretation of what they see, hear, and understand” (Creswell, 2009, p. 176). This methodology requires the researcher to collect multiple sources of data, use inductive reasoning, recognize emergent themes, and present a holistic account for the phenomena or problem being explored. Participants’ perspectives as well as program documents and related literature were interpreted with respect to urban teacher preparation. When approaching a particular problem in qualitative studies, the researcher should consider a theoretical lens or conceptual framework informed by certain assumptions (Creswell, 2007). Several findings in the literature inform this work.

First, the literature suggested that urban schools continue to have challenges with recruiting and retaining qualified teachers (Ingersoll, 2004). Second, several educational-reform initiatives, like NCLB, have required all schools to have high-quality teachers, earmarking efforts specifically to meet staffing challenges in urban schools (Darling-Hammond, 2007; U.S. Department of Education, 2006). Third, ATP has been recognized as an educational-reform movement to address these concerns (Feistritzer, 2005; Gallagher & Bailey, 2000; Weiner, 2000; Weiner et al., 2001).

As the researcher, I posited that urban school principals who are seeking the best prepared candidates are particularly interested in equalizing the distribution of qualified teachers, closing achievement gaps between urban disadvantaged students and suburban advantaged students, and providing urban children in Title I schools with a high-quality education. As Darling-Hammond (2006b) suggested, some university-based programs target urban teacher training; therefore, principals may be interested in graduates from those schools. Principals of Title I urban elementary schools who have partnered with

urban ATP programs at colleges or universities have invaluable insight into what program candidates need to be prepared for Title I urban schools. Hence, principals' feedback about the experiences and preparation provided to prospective teachers may inform leaders of university-based urban ATP programs of how well they are meeting the needs of their stakeholders (Vannest et al., 2009).

A qualitative approach was appropriate for this study because this method of inquiry provides a complex description of a problem and interprets the problem through the voices of participants (Creswell, 2007). This approach looks at meaning in the context of the phenomena and uses data-collection techniques that expose the underlying meaning (Merriam, 1998). Qualitative research supports investigations where the researcher is interested in amplifying the voices of a particular group or an aspect of a particular program. Hence, this qualitative approach will allow principals to focus on their realities and the meanings they ascribe to the phenomenon central to this study: urban teacher preparation. According to Merriam (1998),

The key philosophical assumptions . . . upon which all types of qualitative research are based is the view that reality is constructed by individuals interacting with their social worlds. Qualitative researchers are interested in understanding the meaning people have constructed, that is, how they make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world. (p. 6)

For the purposes of this study, the meanings that principals ascribe to urban schools, urban teaching, urban school challenges, and most important to urban teacher

preparation are of interest. Moreover, the factors that influence how urban teachers are prepared are at heart of this investigation.

A qualitative approach is preferred in this study over a quantitative strategy because in contrast to quantitative research, which takes apart a phenomenon to examine component parts (which become the variables of the study), qualitative research can reveal how all the parts work together to form a whole. Meaning is assumed to be embedded in people's experiences, and this meaning is mediated through the investigator's own perceptions (Merriam, 1998). Hence, no hypothesis is devised from which to test existing theories; rather, abstractions and concepts will be built using inductive strategies common in qualitative research designs (Creswell, 2009). Additionally, the intent of this study is not to form far-reaching generalizations, but to grasp an understanding within the context of each participant's particular experiences and perspectives. A qualitative approach provides a narrow, in-depth analysis of those perspectives (Creswell, 2007).

Interviews served as the primary source for investigating the real-life and meaningful experiences of the principals and how they grappled with the meaning of and need for urban teacher preparation. A common aspect of qualitative research is to collect data from multiple sources. As previously stated, the three sources that influenced this work were face-to-face interviews, a review of documents from university-based ATP programs, and an extensive review of the literature relevant to urban teachers, schools, and teacher preparation. Data from these various sources were summarized, compared, and, when appropriate, merged to address the research questions. The results are

included in the results section of Chapter 4 and in the findings section of Chapter 5.

Methods used to gather and analyze this data will be elaborated on later in this chapter.

The general structure of this dissertation is a qualitative constructivist or interpretivist outline (Creswell, 2007). Constructivist or interpretivist designs include all of the content previously described such as the role of the researcher, data gathering and analyzing, posing specific research questions, and rationalizing the purpose for the work. Additionally, qualitative research anticipates expected outcomes. As I explored this topic of urban teacher preparation, I expected the research participants to be interested in teacher preparation programs that specifically prepare teachers for the urban schools in which they will work and the urban students whom they will teach. Principals were not only interested in this topic, but also appeared passionate about the specific needs of teachers working in Title I urban schools as well as the challenges that these teachers must overcome. Through a discovery process, I intended to gain an in-depth understanding of the meaning that principals assign to urban teacher preparation. This study will reveal how individual principals perceived teacher readiness for Title I urban schools and how aspects of university-based urban ATP programs influence teachers' readiness for urban schools.

### **Guiding Research Questions**

According to Rubin and Rubin (2005), "Research questions are the specific concerns that you want to answer through the project" (p. 40). They stated that research questions are like puzzles to be solved:

For the topic to turn into a research project, you need to find a puzzle or problem that you can solve or answer. This puzzle is your research

question. . . . One approach to working out the researchable puzzle is to think about your topic and ask what appears to be wrong and then question why. (p. 45)

Defining the research questions is critical to the development and outcome of a study (Creswell, 2008; Yin 2009). Questions should be unambiguously constructed and clearly understood. Yin (2009) emphasized that “the key is to understand that your research questions have both *substance*—for example, What is my study about?—and *form*—for example, am I asking ‘who,’ ‘what,’ ‘where,’ or ‘how’ questions?” (p. 10).

This dissertation seeks to answer the following question: How do Title I elementary school principals in urban areas perceive teacher preparation and the impact of teacher preparation provided by university-based urban ATP programs? Principals will be asked the following subquestions:

- a. What skills and knowledge can best prepare new teachers for working in Title I urban schools?
- b. What type of preservice or internship experiences should prospective teachers have prior to becoming the teacher of record in Title I urban schools?
- c. What admission and selection criteria should be considered by university-based urban ATP program leaders for accepting candidates who will likely work in Title I urban schools?
- d. How should university-based urban ATP program leaders assess the readiness of program completers for Title I urban schools?
- e. What support structures are needed from university-based urban ATP programs for prospective teachers of Title I urban schools?



- f. In what ways, if any, should the training differ for teachers who work in non-Title I high-socioeconomic low-minority schools and teachers who work in Title I low-socioeconomic high-minority schools?

### **Research Setting**

When selecting a research setting, Bogdan and Biklen (2007) acknowledged that researchers select organizations and often study some particular component of it. Studying a specific aspect of an organization not only narrows the scope of the research, but also makes the work more manageable.

To maintain anonymity of the university used to screen research participants, it will be referred to as “Urban University.” Urban University is a public research university located in the Southeastern region of the United States offering 55 degrees and 250 fields of study. Degrees are offered at the bachelor’s, master’s, specialist, and doctorate levels. In 2009, Urban University enrolled an estimated 30,000 undergraduate and graduate students. The university’s COE houses over 50 degree programs in six academic departments with a combined enrollment of 3,000 students. The COE seeks to expand the development of individuals by providing high-quality instruction and preparation. According to the COE’s dean, the university coordinates with urban schools on a local, national, and international level to provide rich opportunities for future educators. The COE also conducts extensive research with the intention of developing human capital for urban schools.

Urban University offers four degrees in teaching at the bachelor’s, master’s, specialist, and doctoral levels. Additionally, the university has four alternative routes to teaching. One of the departments offers an ATP program specifically focused on urban

teacher preparation. This department offers eight degree programs, two nondegree programs, and one alternative certification program. According to the university's literature, their urban teacher certification program was established to address the decline of high-quality, knowledgeable teachers, which are needed in urban schools.

The Title I schools at which the research participants are employed have served as placement sites for students who attended Urban University's urban ATP program in 2007. The partnering Title I urban schools are located in the same metropolitan area as Urban University. The schools associated with the program are from three neighboring public school districts. The schools were identified by their student populations: economic status, racial composition, and language proficiency (i.e., English language learners). Schools receiving Title I dollars are categorized as schools that have student populations that have high-minority enrollment and high levels of poverty. At least 35% of the students in Title I schools are from low-income families and qualify for free or reduced-priced meals and often are at risk of not meeting the academic performance standards in NCLB (GADOE, 2010). Since urban schools often qualify as Title I schools, I used Title I criteria when selecting schools.

According to 2008-09 data, the three school districts have several Title I schools. To maintain anonymity, the Title I schools will be referred to as School Districts A, B, and C, and the four principals will be referred to as Reba, Don, Gloria, and Michael. Reba was employed in School District A; Don worked in School District B, and both Gloria and Michael were employed in School District C. School District A had a student population that was overwhelmingly African American and Hispanic (combined over 87%). Additionally, district-wide findings revealed that over 75% of the students were

eligible for free or reduced-priced meals, and 88% of the schools were classified as Title I schools. In comparison, in the 2008-09 academic year, School District B's student population was over 80% African American and Hispanic, and 60% were eligible for free or reduced-priced meals. In this district, 66% of the schools were identified as Title I in the 2007-08 academic year. Finally, School District C had lower minority and poverty students. The 2008-09 state report noted that over 50% of the student population was African American and Hispanic. In the same year, a review of the overall student population revealed that 39% of the students in District C were eligible for free or reduced-priced meals. Last, 43% of District C's schools were identified as Title I in 2007-08.

### **Negotiating Entry**

To conduct this study, I had to gain access to the research sites and obtain appropriate authorizations (Devers & Frankel, 2000). To gain access to the participants for this research, authorization was required from Urban University. Bogdan and Biklen (2007) explained that

in most interview studies, each respondent has to be asked to cooperate individually, but often your subjects will share some organizational affiliation. They may be teachers in a particular school. . . . When this is the case, you may have to seek permission from the organization as well.  
(p. 89)

The following questions are typically of concern to both organizations and participants involved in a research project; therefore, I was prepared to provide sufficient

information concerning the following questions to the school system and research participants:

1. What are you actually going to do?
2. Will you be disruptive?
3. What are you going to do with your findings?
4. Why us? and
5. What will we get out of this? (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 87)

DeWalt and DeWalt (2002) asserted that

no matter the setting, it is important for the researcher to carefully explain the purposes of the research project in terms that are comprehensible to the people who will be studied. . . . Gaining permission is the first step in carrying out research (p. 37).

An overt approach was used to gain access, which required me to make my research interests known to all individuals involved with the study (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). The purpose, rationale, and significance were fully disclosed to appropriate persons.

To gain initial entry, researchers often encounter gatekeepers for the organization. Gatekeepers are those officials, or institutional review boards, who authorize or decline access to the research site, respondents, or documents (Creswell, 2009). Initially a meeting was held with two representatives of the university-based program. After the first meeting, the coordinator of Urban University's alternative teacher certification program was contacted to explain the purpose of this dissertation as it related to the university's teacher preparation model. A meeting was scheduled in the spring of 2009 with the coordinator (and other identified staff) for me to provide more details about the

research and to receive authorization from the university. Resulting from that meeting was the decision to allow me access to the public schools that were associated with Urban University's ATP program in 2007 so that I could identify principals currently serving in those schools.

As stated, the participants are employees of the respective school districts who have partnered with Urban University. According to the Institutional Review Board at Georgia State University, school districts' authorization to conduct this research was not needed since study participants were being asked for their professional perspectives on the topic of urban teacher preparation and the study did not involve their schools' staff or data relative to their schools or school district. However, I had to solicit participation from the principals in school systems who have accepted candidates or teachers from Urban University's ATP program. Bogdan and Biklen (2007) stated that

even if permission is granted from up high without first checking with those below, it behooves you to meet those lower on the hierarchy to seek their support. Your arrival on the scene with a permission slip from the central office is likely to ruffle feathers. (p. 85)

Therefore, I first asked Urban University to identify which elementary schools were partners with the ATP program in 2007.

### **Role of the Researcher**

Rubin and Rubin (2005) suggested that "in establishing an acceptable research role, you have to show who you are in ways that the interviewees accept and understand" (p. 85). As a public school system employee for 17 years, I have worked both in and with urban and suburban schools. Additionally, I shared with the research participants that I have

been a teacher, principal, and currently serve as a central-office administrator. I went further to explain my role as a central-office administrator and how I have participated in both the hiring and termination processes of teachers and other staff. I emphasized that a central focus of my current work involves selecting the most appropriate candidates to work in the school district.

As a researcher, I am aware that my past experiences and current realities can influence this qualitative study because I am considered the primary instrument for conducting the work. There are subjective perceptions and biases that are inherent in qualitative research that

are filtered through that human being's worldview, values, and perspectives. . . . The researcher thus brings a construction of reality to the research situation, which interacts with other people's construction or interpretations of the phenomenon being studied (Merriam, 1998, p. 22).

McCaslin and Scott (2003) asserted that

it is of no small matter for the researcher to have an understanding of the relationship the researcher has with the subject. As the researcher, you must identify and describe your perspective and recognize and deal with the biases you might hold on subjects. (p. 453)

Merriam (1998) also insisted that "the researcher must be aware of any personal biases and how they may influence the investigation" (p. 21). I remained very conscientious of my professional experience and the similarities that existed between my research participants and me. As a former principal, I have a perspective on the struggles that many novice teachers encounter, the type of support needed to improve teacher

performance, the potential differences between teachers trained in ATP programs and those trained in traditional 4-year college of education programs, the challenges that can exist when teachers are unfamiliar with their students' culture, and the role of the principal in observing and supporting teachers. However, as the researcher, my primary responsibility was to give voice to the principals and to allow their constructed realities to inform this work about urban teacher preparation. Hence, I did not express my personal perspective or opinion during the study.

Throughout this qualitative study, appropriate communication techniques were employed and a heightened sense of listening skills was maintained because "a good communicator empathizes with respondents, establishes rapport, asks good questions, and listens intently" (Merriam, 1998, p. 23). During interviews with the study participants, I asked questions slowly and repeated them as needed. As participants responded, I looked for nonverbal cues and expressions that might further emphasize their message. The combination of looking and listening carefully allowed me to capture the perspectives of the principals as they drafted a portrait of the preparation Title I urban school teachers need to receive.

Establishing a trusting relationship with the study participants was critical to conducting this research. This was successfully achieved by revealing to the study participants my professional background, but more importantly by expressing a sincere understanding of the complexities of their work as principals and stressing the need for their stories to be told to broader audiences, those within and outside of the education arena. I emphasized the need for society to hear from educators who are in the trenches, are invested in making a substantial difference in the field of education, and are

ultimately concerned with providing marginalized, disadvantaged children with a quality education through the strategic selection of high-quality, dedicated teachers. My intent was to convey to the study participants the importance of their perspectives being known to individuals who are establishing educational initiatives that have a direct influence on how they staff schools and meet students' needs. This approach appeared to increase participants' feelings of comfort with the study and influenced their responsiveness and willingness to continue with the study. DeWalt and DeWalt (2002) emphasized that

rapport is achieved when the participants come to share the same goals, at least to some extent—that is, when each is committed to help the other achieve his or her goal, when informants participate in providing information for the “book” or the study, and when the researcher approaches the interaction in a respectful and thoughtful way that allows the informant to tell his or her story. (p. 40)

Although I have not worked as an urban elementary school principal, I consider myself to have emic knowledge. Young (2005) mentioned that “emic refers to the concept of ‘insider perspective,’ that is having personal experience of a culture/society” (p. 152). Like the elementary school principals who participated in the study, I have worked in and served urban schools, as defined in the literature (Foote, 2005; Jacob 2007; Sachs, 2004), both as a principal and as a central-office administrator.

### **Research Participants**

Choosing a group appropriate for a study is critical for properly answering research questions and to the outcome of the study. Bogdan and Biklen (2007) posited that “when we speak of ‘a group’ in an organization as the focus of study, we are using



the word sociologically to refer to a collection of people who interact, who identify with each other, and who share expectations about each other's behavior" (p. 61). Merriam (1998) suggested that "collecting data through interviews involves, first of all, determining whom to interview. That depends on what the investigator wants to know and from whose perspective the information is desired" (p. 83). This study focuses on a particular group of principals whose schools served as placement or employment sites for participants in a specific urban ATP program.

According to Merriam (1998), "Selecting respondents on the basis of what they can contribute to the researcher's understanding of the phenomenon under study means engaging in purposive sampling" (p. 83). Purposive sampling involves selecting a unique population who is familiar with the researcher's area of interest and who can provide substantive data (Coyne, 1997; Devers & Frankel, 2000; LeCompte & Goetz, 1982; Merriam, 1998). This sampling method involves seeking information-rich participants who can help the researcher craft a portrait of their perspectives and experiences. Purposive sampling is "based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned" (Merriam, 1998, p. 61).

Four elementary school principals from Title I urban public schools located in the Southeastern region of the United States participated in this study. I intended to select six Titles I urban elementary school principals; however, the university that was used for identifying research participants was already involved in a research project with some of the school districts that could have provided more participants. Consequently, I was able to invite only five elementary school principals to participate. Unfortunately, one of the

study participants elected not to continue with this research project. After her initial commitment to the study and scheduled interview, she later hesitated, expressing concern that her school district might need to approve of her participation. Recalling my experience as a novice principal, I understood her caution in not engaging in work that may be deemed unfavorable, unimportant, or of no benefit to the school district at large. No explanation was provided from the participant who left the study; she simply refrained from additional communication by not responding to phone calls or e-mails. Though the sample size was reduced, it was still appropriate for gaining an in-depth analysis of the issue by using interpretative inquiry methods. Dukes (1984) stated that a small sample size as few as one would suffice and that “the upper limit on sample size is governed by the actual procedures involved in doing the research” (p. 200).

As previously stated, Urban University reviewed its 2007 alumni and alumnae school placements to assist me in identifying appropriate elementary school principals for the study. At the time of participant selection, the 2007 cohort had not only completed all ATP program requirements, but they were in Year 1 of a 3-year commitment to teaching in urban schools. Teachers were likely to remain in their current schools for the duration of the 3-year commitment and would have worked for 1 year under the leadership of the principals who participated in this study.

Ideally, the principals’ schools were involved for at least 1 year with Urban University’s ATP program by accepting interns or teachers into their schools. The elementary school principals had all worked in Title I schools for a minimum of 2 years. Through their work and the positions that they held in Title I schools, the principals were familiar with the demographics of Title I school environments as well as the staffing

needs, challenges, and expectations. The principals had invaluable insight about the type of preparation and experiences they thought prospective Title I school teachers needed. A detailed description of all study participants will be provided in Chapter 4, which includes demographics of their professional experience as well as their personal knowledge of traditional and urban ATP programs.

As a former school principal, I understand that principals are primarily responsible for selecting, recommending, supervising, and evaluating teachers. Hence, principals are typically concerned about how well teachers are prepared for their environments, where preparation gaps may appear, and why gaps may exist. Likewise, principals may also be able to articulate which novice teachers appear most ready for teaching and why.

I contacted all of the principals by phone to solicit their participation. Principals accepting the invitation to the study were asked to complete an informed consent document as required by the Institutional Review Board at Georgia State University. The consent document detailed the purpose of the research, provided a timeframe for and extent of the principals' participation, identified individual risks, and specified ethical considerations. The principals were e-mailed a questionnaire to obtain demographic information and professional experience prior to the interviews. The questionnaire also asked questions that provided me with insight into their understanding of ATPs. The questionnaire is located in Appendix D.

### **Data Collection**

Data for this study was gathered primarily through one-on-one interviews (Rubin & Rubin, 2005).

Smith and Smith (2006) stated that qualitative interview research analysis enables inductive analysis; the interviews provide a detailed narrative, which allows the researcher to interpret and draw his/her own inferences. It allows the researcher to capture the perceived experiences of the people and interpret their stories, recognizing that the accounts were filtered through the researcher's concept of reality. (p. 37)

Interviews were conducted in the late summer at locations that were convenient and easily accessible to participants. Interviews began with a review of the questionnaire that the principals completed. As I embarked on this study, I posited that participants' demographics would be important because their previous experiences could inform their current perspectives on the needs of Title I urban elementary school teachers.

Primarily, the interview questions were semistructured to obtain specific and detailed information about the participants' perspectives. A guide was used to develop interview questions (Merriam, 1998). However, Bogdan and Biklen (2007) stated that "even though an interview guide is employed, qualitative interviews offer the interviewer considerable latitude to pursue a range of topics and offer the subject a chance to shape the content of the interview" (p. 104). The guide was used as a tool to facilitate discussions and to maintain focus on the research questions. The interview protocol consisted of 20 questions (see Appendix B for interview protocol).

In qualitative research, interviews allow a researcher to gain insight into those behaviors he or she has not seen or those experiences he or she has not had. Patton (as cited in Merriam, 1998) explained that with qualitative interviewing

we interview people to find out from them those things we cannot directly observe. . . . We cannot observe feelings, thoughts, and intentions. We cannot observe behaviors that took place at some previous point in time. We cannot observe situations that preclude the presence of an observer. We cannot observe how people have organized the world and the meanings they attach to what goes on in the world. We have to ask people questions about those things. The purpose of interviewing, then, is to allow us to enter into the other person's perspective. (p. 196)

According to Rubin and Rubin (2005), "Qualitative interviewing is not simply learning about a topic, but also learning what is important to those being studied" (p. 15). This was precisely the intent of this study: to explore from the voices of Title I urban school principals what is important in teacher preparation to ensure teachers' readiness not simply as new teachers, but as Title I urban school teachers.

A digital recorder was used to capture all interviews conducted with the participants. Permission to record interviews was sought from each participant prior to tape recording. Research participants were very gracious with their time allowing approximately 1 ½ hours for the interviews. I took notes as required to assist with memory recall. When necessary, probes were used to elicit additional explanation of the principals' responses. Follow-up phone calls to interviewees were made to fill noticeable gaps in responses to questions or to expand on topics discussed with the principals. A follow-up phone call was made to Reba to complete the interview and to ask for clarification regarding her views on the way in which Title I urban schools are characterized and the impact of their characterization on teachers' employment choice.

Don was contact to discuss information supplied on his questionnaire regarding previous positions he had held in Title I schools prior to becoming a principal. I needed to understand the extent to which he was engaged in supporting or supervising teachers since this was a critical criterion for my sample.

As a result of the interviews, over 100 pages of transcription were produced providing thick descriptions of the phenomenon: urban teacher preparation. The researcher provides “enough description so that readers will be able to determine how closely their situations match the research situation, and hence whether findings can be transferred” (Merriam, 1998, p. 211). Several themes emerged from the interviews; the themes will be discussed in Chapter 4 of this study.

I reviewed documents used by five university-based urban ATP programs that were pertinent to the phenomena being studied. Documents establish the underlying meanings and purpose of organizations (Prior, 2003). Prior (2003) also suggested that written protocols can inform us of a program’s intent, and, through investigation of practices, can reveal what is present or absent and what works and what does not work. Therefore, documents created by university-based urban ATP program leaders and staff that outline the preparation process for candidates—course outlines, manuals, rubrics, and guides—were reviewed. Surveys administered by the universities to evaluate candidates/teachers’ preparedness or readiness were also considered. Additional information about program candidates’ internships or other required activities was reviewed. I was aware, however, that merely studying documents for their meaning alone has its limitations and can be misleading.

Instead we ought to study what it is that is referenced in the document. . . .

For we often wish to go beyond noting that something is referenced and to ask questions about how specific items are integrated into “accounts” about this, that, or some other matter. (Prior, 2003, p. 117)

Necessary steps were taken to protect data related to the study. All data gathered was secured in an electronic database that was password protected. Electronic files were maintained in my home office on two separate computers. Although pseudonyms were used to maintain the anonymity of the school principals, information about the participants, such as signed consent forms, were stored in an area separate from the transcribed interviews. A locking file cabinet housed all documents pertinent to the study.

### **Data Analysis**

Dukes (1984) said that the role of the researcher “is to uncover the inherent logic of that experience or phenomenon, the way it makes sense to its subjects” (p. 199). According to Lopez and Willis (2004), interpretive inquiry asks, “How does the lifeworld inhabited by any particular individual in this group of participants contribute to the commonalities in or differences between their subjective experiences?” (p. 729).

In this study, an interpretive framework will emphasize the principals’ voices (the subject’s voice), not my interpretation of those voices. Amplifying the voices of the principals is critical to developing a better understanding of their perspectives. Principals’ current or previous understandings of urban schools, urban teachers’ challenges, and urban students’ needs influence the meanings that the principals’ assign to their actual experiences in these settings. Though the realities revealed in

interpretivism are subjective, they are views that must be illuminated because they are coming from individuals who live an experience (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; see also Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

Crotty (1998) defined interpretive methods as “attempts to understand and explain human and social reality” (p. 67) using an idiographic method. Essentially, I sought to individualize meaning, not make generalizations. Therefore, an interpretive lens allows principals to share their perceptions, understandings, and beliefs about what it means to prepare teachers for urban schools from their personal experiences. Philosophically, the expert knowledge of a researcher informs the inquiry used in interpretive phenomenology “and in fact [makes] the inquiry a meaningful undertaking” (Lopez & Willis, 2004, p. 729).

Hence, when conducting interviews, McCaslin and Scott (2003) stated that “the researcher reduces data gathered as lengthy interviews describing the shared experiences of several informants to a central meaning, or ‘essence’ of the experience” (p. 449). Therefore, a need invariably exists to thoroughly analyze data that “entails classifying, comparing, weighing, and combining material from the interviews to extract the meaning and implications, to reveal patterns, or to stitch together descriptions of events into a coherent narrative” (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p. 201).

A responsive interviewing model was used to compare codes, themes, and concepts from the transcribed interviews. Codes were established as I read each participant’s transcript (see Appendix C). Codes were assigned to sections of transcripts that would provide feedback to research questions. Common codes were used across all transcripts and within each transcript. A thorough analysis of the codes, themes, events,



and concepts created a portrait of the principals' perceptions. To begin the data analysis, I used stages outlined by Rubin and Rubin (2005):

The first stage is recognition, in which you find the concepts, themes, events, and topical markers in your interviews. A *concept* is a word or term that represents an idea important to your research problem; *themes* are summary statements and explanations of what is going on; *events* are occurrences that have taken place . . . and *topical markers* are names of places, people, organizations. . . . Next, you systematically examine the different interviews to clarify what is meant by specific concepts and themes and synthesize different versions of events to put together your understanding of the overall narrative. . . . After you find, refine, elaborate, and integrate your concepts and themes, you begin to code them, that is, figure out a brief label to designate each and then mark in the interview text where the concepts, themes, events or topical markers are found. (p. 207)

The support of a transcriber was elicited to transcribe the tape-recorded interviews. However, I listened to each recorded interview and thoroughly reviewed and made notations on the printed transcripts. Atlas.ti was used to analyze the transcriptions. Analysis began with the very first interviews and continued throughout the entire interviewing process. Data units, also referred to as bits of information, were used to collate similarities among the interviews and to assist with the coding process; Atlas.ti was used for this process. Merriam (1998) asserted that "a unit of data is any meaningful

(or potentially meaningful) segment of data. . . . A unit of data can be as small as a word a participant uses to describe a feeling or phenomenon” (p. 179).

As the coding process ensued, many ideas and concepts required codes (Anfara, Brown, & Mangione, 2002). However, with the voluminous amount of information that was gathered, only those things most relevant to addressing the research problem and answering the research questions were coded (see Appendix C for codes). Bogdan and Biklen (2005) outlined various types of codes that a researcher may consider when organizing data such as setting/context codes, situation codes (subjects’ ways of thinking about people and objects), strategy codes, relationship and social structure codes, activity codes, and process codes.

Rubin and Rubin (2005) suggested that “when you are done interviewing, you then examine all the interviews together to pull out coherent and consistent descriptions, themes, and theories that speak to your research question” (p. 202). The process described by Rubin and Rubin to capture recurring patterns among the various interviews and coherently pull them together is referred to as a “constant comparative method of data analysis” (Merriam, 1998, p. 179). Since data analysis begins after the first interview, notes taken about the first transcript were compared to the notes taken for subsequent interview transcripts. This approach resulted in a master list of concepts that evolved into various categories derived from individual perspectives (Merriam, 1998).

As stated previously, the purpose of categorizing data, creating codes, and identifying themes was to organize the data and provide answers to the research questions. Data were collected, analyzed, and placed on back-up files. The files were created electronically and, when necessary, hard copies were produced. This information

was stored on my home computers and in a locking file cabinet at my residence (Creswell, 2007).

A benefit of an interpretive methodological approach is that it allows flexibility for further investigation of arising themes or the redevelopment of research questions as a result of new information (Crotty, 2003; Lopez & Willis, 2004). Rubin and Rubin (2005) outlined qualitative interviewing strategies that correlate with the interpretive research model. Having semistructured interviews also provided principals with flexibility in introducing concepts and thoughts not presented during the interviews. This flexibility allowed the participants freedom to explore their thoughts. This freedom prompted a more in-depth analysis of the topic (Chase, 2005; Johnson-Bailey, 2004).

### **Confidentiality and Ethics**

When conducting qualitative research, ethical dilemmas may arise (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Bogdan and Biklen (2007) explained that “ethics in research are the principles of right and wrong that a particular group accepts at a particular time” (p. 48). Therefore, I established a relationship of transparency, trust, and understanding with the participants, guided by agreed-upon terms. To understand concerns related to ethical issues in research and the care that should be employed with participants in the study, I completed necessary training. The Collaborative Institute Training Initiative (CITI) course was taken as required by Georgia State University. This course provides necessary information and ethical considerations for researchers working with human subjects. Bogdan and Biklen (2007) identified two of the main concepts emphasized in CITI training, which specify treatment toward research participants:

1. “Informants enter research projects voluntarily, understanding the nature of the study and the dangers and obligations that are involved.
2. Informants are not exposed to risks that are greater than the gains they might derive” (p. 48).

In addition to adhering to the stated guidelines from CITI, appropriate representation was given to the voices of the principals, and confidentiality was strictly enforced. Although pseudonyms were assigned to all participants, Merriam (1998) stressed that “even when the names are changed, some people are easily identified by the details of their message” (p. 132). Therefore, all identifying information about participants such as informed consent documents were maintained in an area separate from interview data or other related information.

An overt approach to the study was taken to uphold all required ethical practices expected by CITI (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). Overt approaches to research insist that participants are treated with respect and that their cooperation is elicited. The intentions of this study were made very clear to the participants. The benefits and potential risks for both the interviewer and the participants were clearly articulated.

### **Interpretation of Findings**

Yin (2009) stated that the purpose of ensuring reliability of a study “is to minimize the errors and biases in a study” (p. 45). Reliability assures readers that findings from a researcher make sense in the context of the research question. Therefore, the conceptualization of the study as well as how data were gathered and interpreted should be clearly exposed to readers. I demonstrated transparency in an effort to maintain reliability and enhance the credibility of the study.

Transparency means that a reader of a qualitative research report is able to see the process by which the data were collected and analyzed. A transparent report allows the reader to assess the thoroughness of the design of the work as well as the conscientiousness, sensitivity, and biases of the researcher. (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p. 76)

Maintaining transparency required me to keep notes, logs, recordings, and the coding categories used to analyze and evaluate the data.

The trustworthiness of a qualitative study may be challenged by the following questions:

1. How can you generalize from a small, nonrandom sample?
2. If the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis, how can we be sure the researcher is a valid and reliable instrument?
3. How do you know the researcher isn't biased and just finding out what he or she expects to find?
4. Don't people often lie to field researchers?
5. If someone else did this study, would they get the same results? (Merriam, 1998, p. 202)

In addition to interviewing Title I elementary principals, documents from five university-based urban ATP programs as well as literature on the topic were reviewed to strengthen the interpretation of the findings. The various pieces of data from multiple sources provide different ways for analyzing the same phenomena (Yin, 2009) and addressing concerns with construct validity (LeCompte & Goetz, 1982). Documents were reviewed to understand how university-based ATP programs identified their

purpose and goals, defined and described the need for urban teacher preparation, designed program components that addressed the needs of teachers working in urban areas, and created experiences that the university deemed critical to the growth and development of urban teachers. The purpose of the document analysis was not to evaluate programs but to explore how the selected urban ATP programs address the staffing needs described by the Title I school principals and in the literature on urban school needs and challenges. A comparison of this gathered data is discussed in the findings section of this research.

### **Summary**

The purpose of this dissertation was to investigate how urban elementary school principals determine a teacher's readiness for their schools by assessing the preparation teachers receive. I intended to reveal aspects of university-based ATP programs that purportedly focus on urban teacher preparation. The voices of Title I school principals assisted in determining how the ATP program candidates' experiences may be readying them for Title I urban schools. This research gives voice to the principals who are recipients of teachers from university-based urban ATP programs.

A qualitative research design was used to examine how four principals of Title I urban elementary schools make sense of their staffing needs and challenges. The principals were able to illuminate what works well and what does not when preparing teachers. Additionally, the principals identified how university-based urban ATP programs might mitigate their concerns about finding appropriate staff for their schools.

Findings from this study may help university-based urban ATP program leaders determine if their efforts are responding to their stakeholders' needs. The analysis of data

focused on the meaning participants assigned to their experiences. Moustakas (1994) explained that

there is general agreement that meaning is at the heart of perceiving, remembering, judging, feeling, and thinking; agreement too that, in perceiving, one is perceiving something. . . ; one is remembering something, judging something, feeling something, thinking something, whether the something is real or not. . . . All experience holds within it essential meanings. (pp. 68-69)

In this chapter, the author presented the methodological rationale, research design, research questions, research setting, and selection of participants, data collection, data analysis, ethical considerations, researcher's role, and an interpretation of the findings. Chapters 4 and 5 will provide a discussion of the findings and conclusions drawn from the study.

## CHAPTER 4

### RESULTS

For this study, the perspectives of four Title I urban school principals were gathered and analyzed regarding the preparation of teachers for Title I urban schools. The primary method for collecting data for this study was semistructured interviews. Each principal's interview was analyzed individually and then synthesized collectively (Merriam, 1998). Using ATLAS.ti software, codes, data units, and categories were generated (see Appendix C for codes). A comparative analysis was conducted using interview transcripts, participant questionnaires, and public documents (websites). Documents were reviewed from the following five universities' urban ATP programs: Harvard University; Indiana University Northwest; University of California, Los Angeles; Johns Hopkins University; and University of California, Berkeley. Documents consisted of items such as manuals, handbooks, admission requirements, course outlines, and program descriptions. The artifacts provided a conceptualization of how several universities represented and implemented urban ATP programs.

This chapter will present the seven themes that emerged from the data: *What is Urban Teacher Preparation? Wearing the Label Title I Urban Schools; New Teachers, Unfamiliar Environments; Preparing Teachers to Teach in Title I Schools; Support for Candidates, Support for Teachers; Are Teachers Ready for Title I Urban Schools? and Selecting Candidates for Urban ATP Programs.* The chapter will begin with a



description of the participants obtained through the questionnaire. The description of the participants will be followed by an in-depth discussion of the seven themes and an overview from the document analysis. This chapter will also include journal entries from students in urban ATP programs and literature relevant to some of the themes.

Pseudonyms were used for all participants to maintain anonymity.

All participants agreed that specific training should be provided to teachers who will work in Title I urban school environments. The principals' expressed that staffing challenges were a consequence of negative stereotypes and the media's depiction of Title I urban schools. Additionally, they all agreed that teacher preparation programs, whether traditional or alternative, should include curricula specific to the urban child and urban schools. The participants also expressed that teachers must have a certain disposition to work and be effective in Title I schools. Although three of the four participants appeared troubled with the term "urban" and did not like the label "urban teacher preparation," all of the participants thoroughly described what they considered to be the challenges of Title I urban school environments, the type of teachers needed for these schools, and the specific training necessary for teachers to be effective and successful. Participants were in agreement that university-based urban teacher preparation candidates should have exposure to Title I urban schools prior to employment. They communicated that the exposure would help prospective teachers understand the realities of teaching responsibilities in Title I schools and potentially increase their ability to succeed in these settings.

### **The Research Participants**

Each of the study participants was asked to complete a questionnaire. The questionnaire collected information about their professional experiences and their awareness of ATP programs. Of the four participants, two were men and two were women. Two of the participants were between the ages of 47 and 57; one was between the ages 36 and 46, and the other was over 57. Coincidentally, two of the participants entered teaching through ATP programs. Collectively, the study participants had over 87 years in the field of education, with the least number of years for any individual being 16. They had a total of 36 years of experience at the Title I urban elementary schools where they were principals when the study was conducted. Two participants each had 11 years of experience as a principal, and one had 13 years. One participant had been a principal for approximately a year and a half at his current school but had served for many years in Title I schools supporting and supervising teachers in other capacities.

I was committed to having a sample of individuals who have had a number of years of experience as teachers and as supervisors of teachers in Title I urban areas. In addition to serving as a teacher for 10 years and as an assistant principal for 2 years, Reba conducted training and served as a mentor for new teachers. Don worked as a program specialist for a migrant program and as an English to speakers of other languages coordinator. He also served as a teacher for 7 years and as an assistant principal for 6 years. Gloria worked as a teacher for 12 years and an assistant principal for 1½ years. Additionally, she was a grade-level chairperson and trained teachers on the uses of technology. Michael taught for 4 years and worked as an assistant principal for 2 years.

In the capacity of grade-level chairperson, Michael mentored and supported both novice and seasoned teachers.

In addition to providing details about their professional experiences, the principals were asked about their familiarity with ATP programs. The following provides a summary of each response:

Don stated that he was familiar with only one ATP program which he defined as “a nontraditional path to becoming certified as a teacher. [Program participants] have degrees in other academic areas besides the traditional education degree.” His school continues to serve as a placement site for many student-teachers.

Reba stated that she was familiar with approximately four ATP programs and one university-based urban teacher preparation program, which was the best program she had seen. Her school also served as a site for student-teacher placements. Reba assisted with making student-teacher assignments, but she did not spend much time with the student-teachers due to her other responsibilities and her focus on instruction in the school. She defined ATP programs as programs whose participants attend 6 to 12 weeks of training and have meetings beyond the school day.

Like Reba, Gloria was familiar with four ATP programs, one of which was a university-based urban ATP program. Although her school had not recently served as a placement site, she indicated that she had employed teachers from a university-based urban ATP programs.

Finally, Michael was aware of three ATP programs; one was described as a university-based urban teacher preparation program. He also stated that his school had served as a placement site for over 20 student-teachers in the previous 8 years. Michael

provided the following detailed response regarding his involvement with student-teacher placements:

We were a hosting school site. My involvement in the program was to work with [ATP program] students, their supervising teachers, professors, and mentor teachers. [I] provided them with realistic exposure and ensured that the in-field experiences stretched across a variety of ranges. Such experiences not only included designing and realigning instructional lessons, but parental communication, community involvement, SST processes and procedures, knowledge of students, and the application of research with their daily practices. Michael's definition of an ATP program follows:

I would define it as a program which takes individuals from certain desirable backgrounds and experiences that may be outside of the educational arena and trains them in pedagogies at an accelerated pace in an effort to prepare them to assume responsibilities as classroom teachers.

The responses to the questionnaires provided a demographic portrait of the research participants and established a baseline of participants' understanding of ATP in general and urban ATP in particular. Table 1 provides a profile of all research participants. The table includes participants' ages, years of experience in education, and positions held in education. The next section of this chapter will discuss themes that evolved from interview responses and the document analysis.

Table 1

*Profile of Research Participants*

Name <sup>a</sup>	Age	Number of years working in education	Number of years serving as principal/assistant principal	Number of years as a teacher	Other positions held
Don	Between 47-57	16	7	7	Federal program specialist for title I migrant program; ESOL coordinator
Gloria	Over 57	28	12 ½	12	Grade-level chairperson; Technology workshop trainer
Michael	Between 36-46	17	13	4	Grade-level chairperson
Reba	Between 47-57	26	15	10	New-teacher mentor; Student support team chairperson; Trainer of teachers
Total		87	47 ½	33	

<sup>a</sup> Pseudonyms were used for all participants.

## **What Is Urban Teacher Preparation?**

### **Defining Urban Teacher Preparation**

The research participants were asked to share their thoughts about the phrase urban teacher preparation. They were asked the following question: What are the first thoughts that come to mind when you hear the phrase urban teacher preparation? Most participants had similar responses when describing what they thought urban teacher preparation meant. From their perspective, urban teacher preparation is designed to help teachers understand diverse student populations from various cultures. The respondents stated that urban ATP programs may benefit teachers who have no background in or knowledge about working with children from cultures that are different than the teachers' cultures. Participants posited that an urban ATP program could familiarize teachers with urban areas and schools where they are likely to be employed. The principals further indicated that urban teacher preparation suggests that teachers would be trained on how to provide instruction for students of color who may have experienced adverse circumstances and who may have been exposed to difficult financial and social conditions. Michael asserted that urban teacher preparation should be designed to help teachers see beyond harsh circumstances to which children are subjected and to provide necessary instruction that extends beyond traditional methods of teaching.

According to the principals, urban teacher preparation will help prospective teachers realize that a certain mindset or disposition must be established to work in Title I urban schools. Respondents emphasized that the purpose of urban teacher preparation should be to help candidates acknowledge that the needs of students as well as the work requirements of teachers in Title I schools are different from those of an affluent non-

Title I school. Don stated, “So you’re preparing teachers to not only teach but to face reality of the everyday challenges that kids face.” He further stressed that these programs must clarify the differences between of culture and race: “You can have three Black boys, one from the United States, one from Haiti, and one from Africa. . . . We label them; these are Black boys.”

Gloria indicated that her own teacher preparation experience did not emphasize specific preparation for working with urban students. She suggested that her training was global and that any particular focus on the urban child was obtained after her program while working in the field. Gloria expressed that urban teacher preparation should help teachers recognize that the needs of children in urban, suburban, and rural settings differ, and that teachers must have a certain mindset and perception when dealing with urban schools and communities.

Study participants’ conveyed that a certain philosophy of how to teach and understand different cultures in urban areas was at the center of urban teacher preparation. Teachers working in urban schools must understand the child, the families, and the community as well as the circumstances impacting a child’s schooling experiences and perceptions about education.

In line with study participants’ suggestions, students in Indiana University Northwest’s UTEP program are required to take several courses that provide teachers with exposure to urban students, their families, and their communities. One of the courses, Cultural/Community Forces and the Schools,

promotes the importance of culture and community to the effective delivery of instruction and the improvement of education for K-12 urban students. . . . The

cultures of families, organizations, communities in the cities of Gary, Hammond, and East Chicago [Indiana] will be explored, along with relevant research and writings on community and urban education in general. The role of parents, families, and other caregivers will be emphasized. Students will have an opportunity to explore their understanding of these factors as they relate to K-12 students in the urban districts that we serve. Time will be spent interviewing people, visiting agencies and organizations, and writing about the cultural, social, and political aspects of life in this tri-city area. (2011, Option II Course Descriptions section, para. 5)

Courses offered in the UTEP program and other university-based ATP programs are evidence of how some universities have designed curriculum around understanding urban students, their families, and their communities.

Reba seemed rather defensive about offering her perspective on urban teacher preparation. Her immediate response questioned what urban teacher preparation was and then she exclaimed, “What kind of teacher do you think we have to have in an urban setting? We need a good teacher.” Reba added that a good teacher in one school can be a good teacher in any school, whether urban or affluent.

### **The Need for Urban Teacher Preparation**

The literature has indicated that urban teacher preparation addresses educational inequities between affluent and nonaffluent underserved student populations (Snipes & Horwitz, 2007) by increasing the number of teachers serving underprivileged high-minority schools (Allen, 2003; NCTAF, 1996; USDOE, 2006) and by providing marginalized students with greater educational opportunities (Gallagher & Bailey, 2000).



To this point, the MUSE program at the University of California Berkeley is committed to preparing teachers for those children who have the greatest need for qualified teachers while focusing on matters of inequity. As stated on the university's website,

The MUSE program takes a pro-active stance regarding issues of equity. Within our coursework and student teaching practices, we consciously and deliberately examine and respond to situations that involve prejudice, lack of inclusion, learning differences, single-perspective knowledge and inequitable school structures and school culture. We prepare future teachers to see their students as resources and to develop the dispositions and skills to learn about students, their families and communities. (University of California Berkeley 2010, Program Overview section, para. 5)

The Harvard Graduate School of Education's TEP has a similar focus. One of its goals is to "prepare teachers for specific challenges of urban education including providing high quality instruction for all students, addressing the causes of unequal access in our educational system, and creating classrooms where previously unsuccessful students can succeed" (Harvard University 2010, Goals and Standard Goals section, para. 3).

Each principal was asked if a program was needed to train and prepare teachers for Title I urban schools, and all indicated that there was a need for urban teacher preparation. Their reasons are aligned with the mission of both the MUSE program and TEP. As previously stated, the principals suggested that Title I urban-school settings require teachers to have a certain disposition and that teachers need to be familiar with the specific needs of urban students and to learn how to best address their needs;

however, two participants, Reba and Don, both expressed concern about categorizing a program as urban. They felt that teacher preparation in universities should include coursework devoted to understanding urban children, their families, and their communities.

Don talked about his experience in what he described as one of the most urban areas in Florida. He stated,

They have their own culture, truly their own culture there, and we are considered the outsiders. I guess when you have urban teacher preparation, the focus is not necessarily how to teach but trying to teach the different cultures, how to survive in the school, and how to understand the urban child. Yes, there is a difference.

Yes, you can learn about various cultures, but I think offer courses and say this is urban culture or the urban school child.

Don later added that if a program prepares teachers

for a Title I school knowing what the expectations are, knowing what they are going to be faced with, knowing what the facts are, I think that's more important than anything else. If you just worry about content and what you learn in a textbook, you're going to be lost. So, yes I believe that you need to be exposed to what the real work is going to bring when you step off that campus.

Gloria indicated that university teacher preparation should provide training for working with the urban, rural, and suburban child. She recalled her teacher preparation experience:

We weren't just taught how to be prepared for the urban setting but for all settings, and so I had a good experience teaching. . . . It was a good education

for me because when I moved here I was in more of an urban setting. I could truly see the difference in the students and their families.

Michael insisted that colleges and universities have the responsibility to expose prospective teachers of Title I urban schools to those school environments. He asserted that the exposure was necessary especially for individuals who have not grown up in urban areas. An excerpt from a Harvard TEP student's September 2006 journal entry stressed Michael's perspective. The TEP student desired to work in an urban setting and shared some realities about who she was in reference to her students:

Growing up in the rural West, I was surrounded by peers and teachers who all resembled me. I lived in an extremely homogeneous community in terms of race, class, sexual orientation, and religious beliefs. I never questioned my upper-middle-class upbringing or felt I was privileged. . . . Yet after living in New York for several years, I soon realized that I was definitely a member of the privileged class and had been isolated in my upbringing in regards to social issues. (Harvard University 2011, Teacher Journals: Rea Taylor section, para. 3)

The TEP student recognized her need for bridging the gap between her middle-class privileged background and the backgrounds of the students that she would teach. She stressed that she wanted to learn how to make lessons culturally relevant to her students. Her observation was central to Michael's discussion about the disconnect between teachers and urban students. The TEP student wrote the following:

On the first day of school, I looked around and realized that all seventeen of my students were of color. In contrast, my teaching partner, mentor teacher, and I were white. I found the obvious racial divide unsettling. . . . I felt that I was

perpetuating the status quo. I was self-conscious about being in a position of authority, representing the dominant class. I worried that my students would not feel comfortable relating to me. (Harvard University 2011, Teacher Journals: Rea Taylor section, para. 10)

Similarly, another TEP student who sought a program with a focus on urban education wrote:

I knew that we would talk about race and class and privilege and difference and the social structure of this country. I knew that even if the conversations weren't supremely productive, they would at least be happening. I thought that this approach would help me avoid accidentally reproducing society in my classroom and that I would begin to know how to make consciously every single decision there was to be made. (Harvard University 2011, Teacher Journals: Leah Ruben section, para. 10)

Michael commented that a lack of exposure to urban areas and cultural sensitivity can impact the success and retention of Title I teachers. Referring to his experience as a middle school teacher in an urban area, Michael stated,

We had a lot of transition when I was a teacher. Teachers came and went; they didn't really stay a whole lot. . . . One of the reasons, in my opinion, is that they were inadequately prepared; they had not had the exposure. It was like coming into an environment that is so different than what they had been taught.

He later added, "Very few people can transition from being instructed as a student in a traditional [university-based] education environment into an urban environment with the expectation of progressing student achievement. It's very unlikely that they will be

successful.” In sum, Michael stated, “We as educators are having an issue because we have not been adequately trained to address the issues of these kids.”

Reba’s response to the need for urban teacher preparation focused on the family circumstances and personal experiences of some children in Title I urban schools. She posited that teachers must realize that students in Title I schools may face different challenges that require the teachers to understand and respond to their students differently than they would a student of affluence residing in a high-socioeconomic area. Reba referenced responsibilities bestowed to some children in urban areas, such as taking care of their siblings. She talked about how children’s responsibilities in the home may interfere with their schooling:

If I am the oldest child and I come to your class and I don’t have my homework, that’s because I had to fix dinner, comb somebody’s hair, or iron their clothes. I cannot do my homework; I am too tired to do that. . . . We have had children who took siblings to daycare and then came to elementary school. Some were so good; we didn’t even know it.

In reference to children’s home life, Reba later explained that teachers needed to realize that the lack of resources available to some students, the scarcity of materials, or lack of exposure may prevent a child from completing homework assignments. She stressed that a child’s academic engagement and performance can severely be impacted by these issues; hence, teachers need programs and experiences that highlight these realities.

Many of the comments from research participants are mentioned in Weiner’s (2000) investigation of the implications for urban teacher programs. In discussing components that give urban schools and urban teaching distinctive features, Weiner

stated that “the most salient aspect of urban teaching is that urban teachers must be able to accommodate the greatest diversity of student needs under conditions that continually subvert their efforts to personalize and individualize education” (p. 371). She added that “urban teachers often work detached from the community and family resources that would help them to understand their students’ lives, needs, and interests” (p. 371).

### **Wearing the Label Title I Urban School**

The research participants were asked the following question: What are some of the staffing challenges Title I urban schools face? All of the study participants identified the negative stigma associated with urban areas as one of the most significant challenges. As noted by Quartz et al. (2004), when teachers have the option of choosing affluent schools over schools categorized as urban, they migrate toward the affluent schools.

All of the principals expressed that most lay people as well as teachers associate the term urban with schools that have children who cannot learn, have behavior problems, have fewer resources, have high poverty levels, and have teachers with low expectations. A review of student journal entries from Harvard’s TEP program affirmed the negative labeling mentioned by study participants. Rea Taylor who attended Harvard’s TEP program in 2006 wrote in her journal:

I remember when I told my mom that I wanted to teach in an urban school, her first reaction was, “But those schools are so dangerous with all the drugs, gangs, and violence.” My mom isn’t alone in this misconception. (2011, Teacher Journals: Rea Taylor section, para. 3, 2011)

Study participants also stated that the media’s portrayal of Title I schools in urban areas as bad or troubled schools affect teachers’ perceptions and decisions to work in

those environments. According to the interviewees, when teachers had employment options, they often selected more affluent schools over high-minority low-achieving Title I schools. The study participants stressed that those teachers who elected to work in a Title I urban school did so with the intent of leaving after a few years. The participants' individual responses elaborated on the issue of staffing challenges.

In addition to discussing how negative labeling of Title I schools creates misconceptions of the schools, Reba highlighted that the work expectations of teachers in Title I urban schools were also a deterrent for some individuals.

If you are not dedicated to those children and you don't want to give of yourself, your time, and your energy, you should not be in an urban school. It's just a different place, a different kind of work. I guess you really have to take children from where they are and get them to where they need to be. People who work in your more affluent schools . . . don't have to do that much.

Reba added,

Teaching is a very hard job; it's not a glamorous job. It entails more than just standing up and delivering—I guess being involved with families, being involved with the schools, and the whole child. You don't find many people who want to do all of that.

Corroborating Reba's argument, another student journal entry from Harvard's TEP program very eloquently stated the difference in working in a small private charter school, which he called Agile Charter, recognized for its students' high-academic performance on state exams and an urban public school, which he called Big Urban Public, struggling to improve students' academic performance. After leaving Agile

Charter located in Texas for the TEP program and spending a day at Big Urban Public in Boston, his entry read:

Suddenly, Agile Charter seems like a sterile (although sensible) option, while Big Urban Public would be an endeavor requiring the greatest passion, patience, and fortitude. If I stay at Agile Charter, or end up at a similar school, I will be stepping into a system that, at least on the surface, seems to be working. I will be attending a well-maintained garden. If I end up at a school like Big Urban Public, I will be tearing out weeds, digging through the nutrient-starved topsoil with my bare hands, chasing away invasive critters, and cursing the elements, all in search of fertile soil where something beautiful and useful might grow. Where should I teach next year? If I wanted the safe life, I would have stayed with the private school in Houston. (Harvard University 2011, Teacher Journals: Scott Thompson section, para. 13)

Michael asserted that working in Title I urban schools was not desirable:

The challenges in the past with getting teachers to come to those particular school settings is that they tend to think in comparison to some other setting. So the challenges would be teachers tend to have lower expectations of the students coming in. . . . Sometimes people equate things that they see on television as reality, so they think the kids are going to be throwing chairs or that they are going to be afraid to walk to their cars or things of that nature.

Michael stated that supply and demand in the workforce sometimes forced teachers to choose urban schools when their options were limited. He contended, “A lot of times as teaching jobs become less available, teachers will go ahead and take jobs in



urban settings, but it may not be their first choice.” Hence, Title I urban schools became the default jobs, not the desired opportunity. The outcome of this reality, as Michael expressed, is that Title I schools may face difficulties retaining teachers.

Gloria offered an additional perspective regarding the challenges with staffing Title I urban schools. She felt that few challenges existed because “there have been so many programs that students participate in that if they go to a Title I school or a school where there is a lot of poverty and diversity then they can get their student loans waived.” She extended this argument beyond the recruitment of teachers.

The challenges that come with teaching students who live in poverty can be overwhelming for young teachers, and depending on how strong they are and how passionate they are about teaching children of multiple economic backgrounds depends on the teachers’ will and drive to remain with it. So, I may not have the difficulty of hiring someone, but retaining them, keeping them is where the challenge is.

When I asked Gloria to elaborate on the specific challenges she felt contributed to teacher turnover in Title I urban areas, she stated, “I really feel it depends on the person and their training and their understanding of poverty; that’s where the challenges came.” Gloria also noted that as teachers encountered the realities of low-parental involvement, lack of respect from parents, and Title I school population needs, they became frustrated. The frustration may have prompted some teachers’ departure from Title I schools.

Don shared Gloria’s sentiments about teacher turnover, misconceptions about Title I urban schools, and the disconnect between teachers’ personal backgrounds and the cultures of students that they may teach. He offered, “A lot of the teachers that you get

coming out of the colleges are brand new. They come from maybe different backgrounds. . . . They are not accustomed to teaching.” The majority of participants determined that if individuals or teachers could look beyond negative stereotypes and actually visit urban school environments, they may establish a more positive perception and a greater interest in working in those schools.

### **New Teachers, Unfamiliar Environment**

To understand their perspectives regarding the challenges that new teachers working in Title I urban schools will face, the principals’ were asked about the following: (a) attributes and characteristics of prospective teachers that might contribute to their effectiveness; (b) areas of teaching in which new teachers have the greatest challenges; (c) attributes that might hinder a teacher’s success; (d) preparation needed for beginning teachers in Title I urban schools; (e). the importance of learning pedagogy versus content knowledge; and (f) local school support offered to new teachers. The responses from participants were merged to address new-teacher challenges.

### **Effective Teachers**

When research participants were asked about attributes and characteristics that could contribute to a teacher’s success and effectiveness in a Title I school, participants were in agreement on a few areas. They all expressed that three of the most distinguishing characteristics of successful and effective teachers are compassion toward students who are underprivileged, a passion for teaching, and an understanding of the personal challenges some student may encounter. Gloria remarked,

When I think of those teachers who were successful, again it’s that passion; they want to teach. I really focus on that because it doesn’t matter how many

programs you have, if you are not passionate about trying to do it or do [your] best, it's not going to be successful. . . . A lot of the teachers that I'm thinking of, that's the common thread they have: the love for teaching no matter who they're teaching.

Principals described compassionate and passionate teachers as individuals who made a concerted effort to understand students' academic abilities and personal challenges. According to the principals, effective teachers connect with their students and create learning opportunities that relate to their students' personal experiences. Michael stated that

the ones that are most successful are the ones that take a personal interest in their students. . . . Those teachers that have an understanding of and compassion for students that are less fortunate than themselves are going to be the most successful.

Michael added that parents and students in Title I schools typically are distrusting of teachers. Hence, he expressed that successful teachers in Title I urban schools are able to remove barriers of distrust and to establish open lines of communication with students and their parents.

Effective teachers were also described by all of the principals as teachers who understand that they would have to work harder and do more for their students in a Title I school than a teacher at a non-Title I affluent school. Working harder was defined as using multiple nontraditional teaching strategies, methods, and resources to meet various needs within the student population. Don asserted that teachers in urban Title I schools

have to do a little bit more. They have to handle a little bit more situations on a daily basis. . . . They do well because they know going in that the kid is coming with probably weaker skills or are at a lower-skill level than the average kid who may come from a more affluent background.

Gloria and Don noted that progress in students' academic performance was evident with teachers who were considered effective.

### **Challenges for New Teachers**

Research participants were asked about the most significant challenges that new teachers in urban Title I schools faced. Each person said classroom management, parent communication, and establishing rapport with students were most difficult for novice teachers. Michael provided a rather poignant response about managing student behavior. He stated that classroom management is easily the biggest challenge.

It sort of goes back to the example that we had a little earlier. Your classroom management issues or ways that you address the issues of classroom management are probably going to be inconsistent with what you're taught in mainstream traditional teacher preparation programs. Again, little Johnny's psychology is going to be quite different than the theoreticians' perspectives who have written the textbook. . . . In urban settings, kids aren't going to give you respect just because you are the teacher, or in some cases just because you are the principal. You have to earn respect. There are no freebies in urban environments. So the biggest challenge for new teachers is classroom management initially.

Reba suggested that issues with classroom management are related to a teacher's failure to learn about students as individuals and their personal experiences. She declared,

When you know individuals you can address them better. I think a lot of times people think that all children are the same. If [teachers] know a little more about the children and use that information properly to support the children and not use it against the children, they have a better chance of working better with those children.

Two of the research participants indicated that the management of paperwork could be overwhelming for many novices. Gloria emphasized that in Title I schools there is a lot of accountability, which requires schools to report vast amounts of information. Consequently, teachers are responsible for collecting, managing, and analyzing several documents that are not typically required of non-Title I schools.

Finally, new teachers' ability to understand and communicate with parents appeared to concern the research participants. Don and Michael asserted that parents in urban environments were sometimes unfamiliar with educational jargon and processes. Therefore, communication needed to be thorough and delivered in terms understandable to parents. The principals also suggested that differences between the personal backgrounds and socioeconomic status of the teachers and parents contributed to difficulties with communication. Because of these differences and the lack of trust previously discussed, Michael and Don both stated that some parents could be confrontational when contacted. Don offered that "after their initial call and depending

on the response they got from a parent, [many teachers would] rather not call just to avoid getting an earful.”

Michael extended this argument indicating that parents sometimes have an inferiority complex that creates barriers to communication. Hence, he suggested that teachers in Title I schools are charged with changing the mindset of not only students regarding the importance of education but also their parents. Gloria added that some new teachers in Title I urban areas have an ideal perspective of the level at which parents will be engaged with the school and will be receptive to teachers’ feedback. Consequently, when teachers were met with resistance from parents, they had difficulties managing the relationship and future communication. During her interview, Gloria alluded to an experience she had with parents at two schools. She indicated that parents at the affluent suburban school respected the teachers a lot more than the parents in the urban school. In sum, new teachers had challenges with classroom management, connecting with students, communicating with parents, and managing the paperwork required in Title I schools.

### **Possible Hindrances to Effectiveness**

The most prevailing hindrance to teacher effectiveness mentioned by three of the four research participants was a teacher’s refusal or inability to acknowledge the personal hardships that might influence their students’ ability to perform positively (academically and behaviorally) in a Title I school. Two of the respondents stated that teachers’ negative perceptions or attitudes of underprivileged children can have an impact on how they teach students. Reba posited, “It’s really quite simple; it’s what we believe. Some people believe that because children are poor and don’t have certain things, they can’t learn.”

In Gloria's response to factors that could hinder a teacher's effectiveness, she initially returned to the notion of having a passion to teach. She asserted that educators who have no passion for teaching in general will struggle in Title I schools. Gloria added that teachers who have no idea of how to teach children from diverse backgrounds or children with backgrounds different from their own may be stifled in their ability to positively affect the learning of children in urban areas. Referring to the possible disconnect between teachers and urban students, Gloria stated,

If you sit down and reflect, you've got to realize that I didn't grow up the same way as my students. I don't know the challenges they have because I have never experienced them; therefore, I've got to understand that and try my best to work around it.

Lastly, Don responded that struggling, ineffective teachers are inflexible with their expectations and requirements of children.

You have to have flexibility and be able to accept the child that walks into your classroom. You can't pick and choose the children that you want to teach. So, those [teachers] who want a specific type of child, the one who sits and never answers back but says 'yes ma'am' and 'no ma'am,' are going struggle in a Title I school because of the diversity we have.

Though variations in interview responses were evident, the most prevalent factor that appeared to hinder a teacher's effectiveness in Title I schools was how well the educator understood the academic and personal needs of students in urban areas. Additionally, teachers' failure to recognize the differences between their personal

experiences and the hardships experienced by some of the children in Title I urban schools could present challenges.

### **Preparing Teachers for Title I Urban Schools**

#### **Training and Preservice Experiences**

Conversations with study participants about the preparation and training needed for prospective teachers of Title I schools were similar to discussions about preservice or internship experiences. Principals were asked the following questions: What training and preparation should be included in university-based urban ATP programs to enhance teacher readiness in Title I schools? and What would an ideal preservice or internship consist of for prospective Title I urban teachers? All of the study participants suggested that an ideal preservice program for prospective teachers should include total immersion into Title I schools, have a duration of at least half a year, extend across grade levels and school sites, and provide teachers with opportunities to learn about urban areas and how to meet the diverse needs of students from different cultures.

The principals communicated that prospective teachers need to be keenly aware of Title I school environments, teacher responsibilities, and student challenges. Gloria reported that the student-teaching internship should be for an entire school year to allow prospective teachers an opportunity to experience what happens throughout a school year:

You really need to see it from the beginning to the end to get an understanding of what a school year is like and to understand what it's like for a teacher to plan lessons, interact with teachers, collaborate with colleagues, participate in professional development, and put theory into practice.



Gloria likened her proposal for a year-long student-teaching internship to that of a medical student's residency experience. She suggested that residency models provide opportunities for future doctors to hone their skills and expand their expertise. In addition to extending student-teaching internships for an entire year, she also suggested that colleges and universities revamp 4-year teacher education programs. From her perspective, teacher education should be taught throughout the 4-year period and include early exposure to Title I school environments. Gloria posited that 4-year teacher education programs currently concentrate the bulk of teacher education training in the last 2 years of the program. According to her, many ATP programs are customarily 2 years. Therefore, she considered the length of training for alternatively prepared teachers similar to that of teachers who complete traditional 4-year COE programs. Sharing a similar perspective to Gloria's, Reba commented that

the ideal situation would be for [teachers] to come into a Title I school and have an opportunity to do the same work that a teacher in a Title I setting would have to do. I think they need to be here at the beginning of the school year and stay throughout the school year. I think they need to plan, analyze data for students, and identify needs that the data tells you that students may need. They need to do everything that a good teacher in a Title I school would do.

The other two study participants stressed that teacher candidates need full disclosure of the varied responsibilities of a teacher in a Title I school. Future teachers must realize that teaching in a Title I school requires a lot of work beyond understanding content, developing lessons, and delivering instruction. Most study participants revealed that prolonged immersion in Title I school environments would offer future teachers a

critical perspective on how to handle what they considered real-life situations. Gloria explained that

it's all about what we offer student-teachers so they truly understand the culture of the school and what educating children is all about. [Teaching students] is not just about the academics; however, that's the most important part. There are other things that have to work in order to be able to educate students effectively.

Michael added that urban ATP programs need to ensure that students spend “a substantial amount of time really looking at culture and its impact on education [and] how teachers overcome barriers to be able to achieve certain goals.” He further offered that students in urban ATP programs should have access to research about Title I urban schools and participate in projects that connect them with other students around the world who are preparing to teach in urban areas. Michael proposed that these strategies could expose students to methods or strategies for achieving success in Title I urban schools.

As previously mentioned, most of the principals indicated that students in urban ATP programs should be somewhat familiar with the personal experiences of the students they will teach as well as the communities in which the students live. Reba asserted,

You need to know the surroundings, know what your children are exposed to, so you need to get in a car with someone who is familiar with that community and the school. Then you [can] better understand their environment.

Principals in the study agreed that an ideal preservice program would involve a lot of collaboration between university professors, students-teachers, principals, and student-teachers' cooperating teachers at the school level. According to interview responses, during preservice, students would observe other teachers and eventually take on the

responsibilities of fully-credentialed teachers including preparing lesson plans, collaborating with teams of teachers, communicating with parents, reflecting on teaching practices, and managing classroom time.

Study participants were also asked if the training and preparation offered to prospective teachers of Title I urban schools needed to differ from that offered to prospective teachers of non-Title I low-minority affluent schools. A couple of respondents suggested that all teacher preparation programs, whether urban alternative or traditional, need to include courses on multiculturalism or courses on understanding the urban child. Understanding the developmental cycle of small children and learning pedagogies for teaching children were also mentioned as important topics for any teacher preparation program. All of the principals recommended that teachers interested in working in Title I urban environments should have specific training that addresses the complexities and needs of those student populations. Hence, affirming that the preparation of teachers who will serve in non-Title I schools should differ from teachers seeking employment in Title I schools.

### **Pedagogy or Content Knowledge**

As stated in Chapter 2, Berry, Montgomery, and Curtis et al. (2008) and the USDOE's 2002 press release suggested that content knowledge is extremely important in the preparation of teachers. Darling-Hammond and Baratz-Snowden's (2005) work acknowledged the importance of content knowledge and pedagogy. However, they stated that effective teachers must have skills that extend well beyond content. The feedback from principals gathered by Torff and Sessions (2005) revealed that content knowledge

has little influence on teachers' ineffectiveness; however, pedagogy impacts teacher quality.

All of the participants stated that both pedagogy and content knowledge are critical to a teacher's development. However, I urged participants to choose one area which they deemed more critical in the preparation of new teachers for Title I schools. When asked to choose either pedagogy or content knowledge, all participants expressed some trepidation about choosing one over the other and appeared eager to justify the importance of both. Two principals stated that content knowledge was more critical and the other two thought pedagogy was more critical for new teachers.

Michael and Don selected pedagogy as the more critical area of focus for new teachers in Title I schools. Michael contended that it would be easier for a new teacher to acquire the content knowledge that may be lacking than to learn pedagogical skills. He stated that

when you start teaching and applying strategies that have been proven over time, you are also learning. . . . You can come with all of the content knowledge in the world, but if you do not have the ability to impart that knowledge, it's going to be counterproductive.

He also stated that as curriculum changes, teachers will be required to learn about those changes in their content area.

Don's response was similar to Michael's perspective:

You need to be able to teach the curriculum; you need to be able to bring that to the class. At the same time, you need to understand how the child thinks and develops to ensure that you are meeting the needs of that child on his level.

Conversely, Reba and Gloria regarded content knowledge as the more critical area to master for new teachers. Gloria aligned her choice with student academic performance. She noted that

when you are in a setting like mine, you want teachers to understand content more than anything. Teachers have to understand what they are supposed to be teaching and what to do if children are not learning. . . . It's hard to say that one is more important than the other. I do believe that at some point, content is going to be a little bit above pedagogical thinking.

During the interview, Gloria put more emphasis on content knowledge than pedagogical skills. However, she also suggested that the type of school environment may influence where to place the most emphasis.

Reba emphatically expressed that content knowledge is more critical than pedagogy. "If I have those so-called skills and nothing to attach to those skills, it's never going to work." From her perspective, teachers who are well versed on how to teach and could implement a variety of teaching methods would not be effective in the classroom if they were lacking content knowledge.

### **Supporting Candidates, Supporting Teachers**

The support structures that are needed for candidates in urban teacher preparation programs and new teachers working in Title I schools were examined from two lenses: university-level support and Title I school-level support. When discussing the type of support Title I schools provided to alternatively prepared teachers, the participants were also asked to assess whether that support should differ for a teacher who had completed a traditional 4-year COE program.

**Title I School-Level Support**

Most participants revealed that all new teachers, whether alternatively or traditionally prepared, need similar support. Don contended that “support is support because we all know that practice and theory are two different things. You come and sometimes all you learned goes out of the window.” However, he asserted that teachers who complete an ATP program would not be as familiar with teaching practices or pedagogy as those who complete traditional 4-year teaching programs since their previous degrees were oftentimes not in the field of education. Don, who completed an ATP program, discussed a personal experience:

I learned about child psychology, but at the same time, there were no instructions on how to deal with behavior and culture and different things like that. I taught a group of eighth graders in an urban school; it was an eye-opener.

Gloria added that alternatively prepared teachers need to be observed more than traditionally trained teachers “to see in what areas they are lacking simply because they have not had the experience and the opportunities for more practice as compared to the traditionally trained teacher. I think student teaching is where teachers get to practice.”

Reba was rather descriptive about the support she thought new teachers needed from Title I schools. When I asked her what should support for new teachers look like, she responded,

It would look like having the opportunity to have conversations, have lessons modeled for them, and have a lot of guidance in a lot of areas like curriculum mapping. Teachers would learn the importance of pacing and how to use our

standards and how to align them with assessments. Teachers would learn how to talk to parents and hear what parents don't really say.

According to Reba, this type of support should be provided to all new teachers.

All of the participants agreed that assigning mentors to new teachers was a critical step in allocating support to novices. In fact they suggested that mentorship should be ongoing and last for at 1 ½ years. In fact, Don stated that if he had not received the level of support provided by his mentor, he would have quit teaching. He gushed about the sincere, earnest interest his mentor took in helping him. According to Don, his mentor insulated him with support from the grade-level team and sent him to staff development workshops. Although the principals agreed that Title I schools should provide support to alternatively prepared teachers, Gloria revealed that this task can be difficult because, unlike when they are student-teaching, teachers must manage a multitude of tasks, which sometimes makes it difficult for schools to provide the type of support needed.

### **University-Level Support**

All of the research participants noted that collaboration among the university professors, principals, student-teacher, and cooperating teacher is a critical means for rendering support. They also stated that student-teachers must be given opportunities to reflect on what they observed and experienced at the local schools. Gloria asserted that support from the university would not be as extensive as support offered by the Title I school. She indicated that college professors only visit the schools periodically to observe student-teachers, so they do not witness how student-teachers perform on a regular basis. Michael offered an interesting perspective on university-level support. He

suggested that university-based urban ATP program leaders could offer substantial support to student-teachers if their programs are moved off of the university's campus.

Instead of having it on a college campus, why not partner with a school. Let's say you work with [a particular] public school district. Find a school in [that district] where the program could be housed. In that environment, while professors are providing instruction, they have classes going on. It's a total immersion program. So, in terms of support, you're there.

Reba added that college professors need to spend more time in the schools in order to assess the type of support program candidates need. Voicing her concern, she proclaimed that "a lot of your professors in college have not been in a school in a long time." When I asked Reba why this concern was significant to her, she replied, "They are teaching from a textbook. They need to go into some of the schools. . . . They need not believe everything they read in a newspaper about schools—period, and especially urban schools."

The study participants offered more insight regarding the support university leaders' could provide when they were asked to share ways in which the leaders could assess program candidates' readiness for Title I urban schools. Candidate readiness will be discussed in the next section.

### **Are Teachers Ready for Title I Urban Schools?**

Conversations about assessing teacher readiness for Title I schools were similar among research participants. All participants agreed that university program leaders should evaluate program participants primarily through observations. However, they included that urban ATP program leaders should provide opportunities for reflective



conversations about real life situations and collect data from various individuals at the school site who worked with the student-teacher.

Don was the most descriptive and vocal about how student-teachers should be assessed. He posited that university leaders should include input from school-based employees when evaluating the performance of prospective teachers. The level of involvement of school-based employees includes principals conducting observations of and providing feedback to the student-teacher. Don also recommended that university professors “have reflective sessions when they go to the school and give students situational questions requiring them to think.” Don stated that university leaders should have a standard of performance for their students and should use rubrics and checklists to monitor their progress.

Don also expressed that a disconnect existed between what professors taught at the university and what actually occurs in Title I schools. He thought that the principal and college professors should hold an exit session with student-teachers upon completion of their programs. The purpose of the session would be to inform student-teachers of their progress and performance. Don further suggested that colleges should work with local schools to establish urban ATP programs and set criteria for measuring student-teachers’ progress and readiness.

Michael’s response was similar to Don’s. Michael supported information being gathered from multiple sources:

I think there has to be a survey of students. There has to be a survey of other staff members who worked with that teacher intern either in collaborative processes

like SST meetings, parental conferences, or community visits. Information should be provided by the college professor and the supervising teacher.

Reba's comments focused on the interaction that student-teachers have with their students. She suggested that professors observe how student-teachers interact with children in the school and note if the student-teachers made attempts to understand the children.

Discussions about teacher readiness included the performance of new teachers once they began working at Title I schools. Specifically, study participants were asked if differences existed between the performances of alternatively prepared teachers and traditionally trained teachers. Their discussions revealed that they thought students who completed a traditional 4-year COE teacher preparation program were more familiar with educational jargon, teaching pedagogies, resource availability, and curriculum implementation.

Interestingly, Don emphasized that teachers who had not been exposed to Title I urban schools, whether traditionally or alternatively prepared, would face challenges in those environments. He contended that the student who completed a traditional 4-year COE program would have an advantage over the alternatively prepared teacher because of student-teaching experiences and other preparation; however, he maintained that no advantaged existed for the traditionally prepared student when working in a Title I urban school.

### **Selecting Candidates for Urban ATP Programs**

The cross-case analysis of the principals' interview responses revealed that when candidates were being considered for urban ATP programs, principals were primarily

interested with one particular question: Why is the individual interested in working in Title I urban schools? According to research participants, university program leaders should assess candidates' understanding of Title I school environments, explore the extent to which candidates are familiar with children in urban areas, investigate the type of interactions or jobs candidates have had with other children, and thoroughly examine why candidates want to teach in urban areas.

The study participants were asked how the personal experiences and academic backgrounds of program candidates should be considered. All of the study participants agreed that previous experience with children could demonstrate a candidate's desire to work with children. Don asserted, "I would look at their professional development outside of the education realm. What did they do before? Did they ever work with children? Maybe, they were a camp counselor or ran a youth group at church." Don stated that he explores these questions when considering new hires regardless of the teacher preparation program they completed. However, he shared that the questions were critical to ask when selecting teachers for an urban ATP program because those candidates' backgrounds were typically outside of the field of education.

Reba was the only participant who expressed that the personal experiences of candidates should not impact admittance to an urban ATP program. "I don't think you have to be impoverished to know that it is not a good place to be, and I don't think you have to be without wonderful experiences to know that that would be something great for those students."

Principals were also asked if the selection criteria for urban ATP program candidates should differ from traditional 4-year COE programs that do not have an urban

focus. Three study participants posited that the selection criteria for individuals interested in an urban ATP program should be different than the criteria used for traditional 4-year COE programs. The following represents responses from the research participants.

Gloria suggested that urban ATP program leaders require a personal narrative from candidates that would address why they want to work in a Title I urban school. From her perspective, from a candidate's personal narrative, program leaders should be able to ascertain if the candidate understands "that we live in a diverse world and that people come with a variety of experiences and all that makes up the individual." Gloria added that those individuals who want "to contribute to a child's well-being and make them a little well-rounded person while showing them how to appreciate other cultures and life" in general are the type of people who should be considered for urban ATP programs.

Gloria emphasized that people who want to work in Title I urban schools must demonstrate a passion and desire for teaching in those schools. She contended that "the challenges that teachers face in teaching students of poverty are a bit different from teaching in a setting that you don't have as many challenges." Reba added that program candidates should have to complete a required number of community service hours in an urban school or area before being considered:

We say we want to be in those schools, but we have never been in one. We say all of the time that we believe all children can learn, but we don't believe that. So I think they need to be required to have so many community service hours and actually do some volunteering in our schools.

Michael voiced that he “would look for someone who has, as we say, gone through some things in life, someone who beat the odds somewhere after coming up in some not-so-fortunate circumstances.” Michael agreed with Reba suggesting that candidates do some volunteering in Title I urban schools before entering an urban ATP. He thought that this experience would help candidates determine if they really wanted to work in those types of schools. Michael stated that program leaders’ processes for selection need to ensure “that [candidates’] motives are genuine and it’s not just a spur of the moment” decision.

Principals also seemed interested in how previous college coursework or experiences might have prepared future teachers for a career in education at a Title I school. Although study participants stated that coursework may have some relevance to selection, they noted that the undergraduate GPA of potential candidates may have little influence on their ability to perform as teachers. A few participants indicated that a high GPA such as a 3.5 on a 4.0 scale was an indicator of the potential candidate’s perseverance and commitment to achieving goals. Reba was the only participant that insisted that strong content knowledge was imperative.

As previously stated, the most critical criterion for acceptance into an urban ATP program appeared to be the candidates familiarity with children in urban Title I schools. The principals seemed to agree that individuals who were not reared in urban areas needed to have some exposure to those environments prior to admittance to an urban ATP program.

### **Document Analysis**

The websites of five university-based urban ATP programs were perused. A review of handbooks, manuals, program overviews, mission statements, and other documents was conducted to examine the student-teaching or preservice offerings along with other program components. Most of the programs are two pronged: candidates obtain teaching credentials and a master's degree in education.

Additionally, most of the programs include some type of course or experience that introduces program candidates to the issues that impact urban environments. The programs also place emphasis on understanding urban children and addressing multiculturalism and diversity. In addition to courses, preservice teaching or student-teaching internships occurred in schools classified by the universities as urban. Common elements of student-teaching throughout the programs include observing classes, assisting teachers with lessons, and eventually serving as the lead teacher of the classroom. Several of the universities partner with local school districts. The partnerships offer a training ground for program candidates and future employment opportunities with the partnering school district. The following provides an overview of each university-based urban ATP program.

#### **Harvard University TEP, MidCareer Math and Science Program (MCMS)**

The MCMS program has developed six standards that support their work in responding to the following question guiding their efforts, "What does it mean to be an effective educator of urban youth?" (Harvard University, 2010, TEP Program Standards section, para. 1). Harvard's MCMS program is committed to preparing "teachers for the specific challenges of urban education including high quality instruction for all students,

addressing the causes of unequal access in our educational system, and creating classrooms and schools where previously unsuccessful students can succeed” (Harvard University, Goals and Standards section, para. 1). Teachers who complete the MCMS program will be prepared for challenges in urban education and will have had hands-on experience through their placements in urban schools. Through their courses, participants’ awareness and knowledge of urban communities and urban students will be enhanced.

The MCMS program at Harvard was founded in 1983. It is an 11-month program for midcareer switchers who have had at least 5 years of professional experience outside of the field of education. Through extensive coursework and field experiences with a huge emphasis on merging theory with practice, participants are prepared for urban middle and high schools in the Boston area. The program enrolls approximately 10 candidates per year who are typically between 30 and 50 years of age.

The MCMS program partners with the Cambridge Rindge and Latin School to provide a 6-week summer academy for teacher education students. While in the academy, students teach a 2-hour class, participate in planning lessons, and have debriefing opportunities with mentors. In the fall semester, program candidates take courses and are involved with fieldwork in urban districts in Boston and Cambridge. Teaching occurs in the spring term at the school sites.

As previously mentioned, MCMS program participants maintain reflective journals and participate in advisories. Excerpts from student journals were shared earlier in this chapter. In addition to enforcing a practice of reflection on teaching and learning, the journals provide valuable feedback to program leaders on how experiences are

impacting student interns. A community of support is created for teacher interns that merges coursework with practical experiences in the schools and includes activities such as developing portfolios and engaging in research. Advisories are a means for providing support to program candidates, allowing for constructive conversations with other prospective teachers and feedback from supervising teachers. Additionally, mentor teachers conduct preobservations and postobservations (approximately every 2 weeks) through the fall and spring semesters.

### **Indiana University Northwest, Urban Teacher Education Program (UTEP)**

According to the program literature, “it is the mission of UTEP to improve the quality of urban education through the preparation of teachers to create a cooperative and supportive environment in which university and classroom faculty work as partners in urban professional development schools” (Indiana University Northwest, 2010, The History of UTEP section, para. 3). Since its inception in 1990, UTEP has enrolled over 300 students. The program attracts substitute teachers, teachers with limited licenses, and career switchers who have bachelor’s degrees outside of the field of education. As a part of their admissions process, UTEP conducts what they consider to be “a rigorous interview” (Indiana University Northwest, 2010, Schedule of Option II Courses section, para. 4).

Program participants engage in a year-long internship in urban middle or high schools and earn course credits toward a master’s in urban education. “The internship during the academic year includes university courses in content-area methods, testing and measurement and reflection upon urban school setting. Summer courses are spent examining the urban school to greater societal needs and the urban context” (Indiana



University Northwest, 2010, Option II-Undergraduate Program section, para. 3). During the internship practicum, students have assigned mentors at their school sites who assist them with becoming familiar with other faculty members as well as with school policies and procedures. In addition to internship responsibilities, UTEP students must complete 15 hours of service learning either at a crisis center, with a literacy coalition, or at an alternative school. Additionally, students journal about their experiences throughout the program.

UTEP's 2011 student handbook noted that students will also complete 10 weeks of field experience leading to student-teaching. Three courses that are offered before student-teaching begins require students to attend weekly seminars, complete 30 hours of community service, and spend 2 full days per week (for 10 weeks) in classrooms with students. These activities occur in the first half of the year-long internship. The handbook details components of the program, student and faculty expectations and requirements, and how candidates are assessed.

According to UTEP's 2010 *Student Teaching Handbook*, "Student teachers should participate in the total education activities of the school. [This] is regarded as an integral part of the student teaching experience and is neither optional nor supplemental" (p. 2). Student teachers are also expected to attend all activities assigned to their classroom cooperating teachers including professional-development activities. The mentors working with UTEP students have an average of 25 years of experience and are considered subject-matter experts with significant familiarity with urban schools and urban students. Mentors observe UTEP students weekly and provide feedback, model lessons, and assist with lessons. In addition to mentors' preobservations and

postobservations, mentors meet daily with UTEP students if needed. University staff also have regularly scheduled meetings with program participants, and the participants must attend weekly seminars.

UTEP collaborates with the School City of East Chicago, the School City of Hammond, and the Gary Community School Corporation. Graduates from UTEP have priority for employment in these school districts. Through the established partnerships, four PDS schools serve as regular sites and assist with the development of teachers for urban areas. Recognizing a shortage of teachers in the school districts supported by UTEP, the program leaders espoused that

the PDS will continue to be an essential part of the growth and development as we strive to prepare quality teachers for urban schools and provide them with updated research in urban education that is a key component in keeping our program strong. (Indiana University Northwest, 2010, The History of UTEP section, para. 11)

UTEP is guided by its conceptual framework, which emphasizes creating reflective practitioners whose dispositions for teaching have been thoroughly examined. At various stages throughout the program, UTEP students and mentors assess teaching dispositions (see Appendix E for teaching disposition forms and information). Program leaders consider this aspect of the program critical in the development of prospective teachers for urban schools.

## **Johns Hopkins University, Professional Immersion Master of Arts in Teaching (ProMAT)**

ProMAT is an 18-month program that provides opportunities for second-career individuals to obtain a teaching license in Maryland and a master of arts in teaching from Johns Hopkins University. For admission to ProMAT, candidates must have prior experience working with children and must submit a personal statement. Prior to beginning the program, interested individuals must have been a substitute teacher and have received a favorable recommendation from a school-based administrator in Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) in Rockville, Maryland. Students are enrolled as a cohort and begin the program in January of each year.

The ProMAT program partners with MCPS and requires program participants to work within the district for 2 years. MCPS pays for all of the coursework required for program candidates with the exception of the first six credits and most books and fees. Candidates for ProMAT are placed in teaching vacancies in MCPS upon successful completion of coursework, requisite exams, and the summer field experience. While working as the teacher of record in available positions, ProMAT students receive a stipend of approximately \$29,000.

Support for ProMAT candidates is extensive. Four levels of support are outlined on the website. During the 1st year of placement, ProMAT students are observed often by a university supervisor and a school-based coach. The university supervisor is typically a retired MCPS professional, and the local school mentor is an experienced teacher. An advisor is also assigned to ProMAT students when they begin developing the required portfolio project culminating their experience. Graduation from the ProMAT

program requires a positive recommendation not only from university supervisors but also from school principals.

### **University of California Los Angeles, Center X, TEP**

Center X, housed in UCLA's Graduate School of Education and Graduate Studies, was established in 1992 as an activist community to address social inequalities that generate gaps in educational opportunities. In 1994, Center X established a TEP that enabled individuals to obtain teaching credentials and a master's degree in 2 years. The Center's website documents that over 1,500 urban teachers have been prepared for some of the hardest to staff urban schools in Los Angeles. Center X maintains strong partnerships with the Los Angeles Unified School District and Compton Unified School District.

The TEP overview has the following eight guiding principles:

1. Embody a social justice agenda
2. Foster sustained engagement in teaching and learning
3. Attend to the moral, cultural, and political dimensions of teaching,
4. Blend theory and practice
5. Collaborate across institutions and communities
6. Participate in collaborative inquiry within communities of practice
7. Focus simultaneously on professional education, school reform and reinventing the university's role in K-14 schooling
8. Mirror the diverse, caring, anti-racist, socially-responsible learning communities (UCLA, 2010, Center X Teacher Education Program Overview section, para. 1)

The 2-year TEP considers the 1st year as the novice year, which consists of coursework and student-teaching. The 2nd year is the resident year, during which the participant works as a full-time classroom teacher. As specified in UCLA's 2010-2011 faculty and student handbook, in the 1st year, coursework emphasizes "the complexities of urban schooling" (p. 11). During this phase of the program, students receive support from a guiding teacher, which includes help understanding the developmental learning cycles of children, the school culture and community, how to plan standards-based instruction, and the importance of reflective practice. Eventually, the novice will teach full days at the school site for 2 weeks. The resident year requires participation in weekly seminars and the completion of an Inquiry Project. A resident advisor ensures that 2nd-year students continue to grow in the program and that they meet all expectations outlined during this phase of development.

UCLA's Center X expects students to be familiar with the communities and home environments of their students. Center X program leaders asserted that engagement with communities and parents would allow program participants to become more familiar with their students. This familiarity would encourage student-teachers to merge classroom learning with students' experiences. UCLA's *Teacher Education Program 2010-11 Program Handbook for Faculty and Students* outlined the following:

By engaging children and their families in finding and solving real problems that matter to them outside of school, school work can become less abstract and detached. . . . Seeing students in their homes and better understanding the interactions and backgrounds they bring from home, including the experiences

they have had and the ways in which their families talk about these experiences, allows a teacher to develop a richer sense of the student. (p. 4)

As leaders work to transform public schooling, Center X's TEP designed a comprehensive experience for students "to develop both the commitment and capacity to facilitate social justice, caring, anti-racism and instructional equity in urban schools for student populations traditionally underserved by high quality educational programs, especially low-income, racially, culturally and linguistically diverse students" (UCLA, 2010, p. 3).

In addition to the 2-year program, TEP offers other pathways leading to a master's degree and California teaching credentials as outlined in the program handbook: IMPACT: Urban Teacher Residency Program, Joint Mathematics/Education (JMEP), and Science/Education (STEP) Programs. IMPACT is an 18-month program requiring summer coursework and a 10-month apprenticeship. JMEP offers university seniors majoring in mathematics an opportunity to take education courses followed by a full year of employment in a partnering school while working towards a master's degree in education. No information was specified in the handbook for STEP.

### **University of California, Berkeley, Multicultural Urban Secondary Education (MUSE) Program**

The MUSE program is housed in the graduate school at the University of California Berkeley. Its philosophy is to prepare the "best teachers possible for the students who need them most," address "issues of equity, " and promote "a vision of teachers as reflective professionals" (University of California Berkeley, MUSE Philosophy section, paras. 1-3).

The 2-year program prepares individuals for teaching positions in middle and high school English. Student-teaching occurs in the 1st year and includes teaching experiences at two placement sites across several grade levels. Additionally, “student teachers work in schools with populations of students from diverse ethnic, racial, socio-economic and language backgrounds” (Student-Teaching section, para. 1). During this phase of teacher development, program participants are assigned an experienced urban teacher to provide support. Additionally, student-teachers are expected to participate in programs or activities in the communities where their students live. The MUSE program included the following in their student-teaching description:

MUSE candidates are involved in the full range of classroom activities including observing, assisting, team teaching, and lead teaching. They also attend and participate in events in the school as well as in the neighborhoods in which their students live. (University of California Berkeley, 2010, Program Overview, Student Teaching section, para. 1)

In the 1st year, students attend full-time, take evening classes, and teach during the day. Fieldwork supervisors meet weekly with student-teachers both at their student-teaching sites and at the university. Supervisors provide resources and curricular support and help students to make real connections between the theory and practice of teaching. Upon completion of the 1st year, participants receive preliminary teaching credentials that enable them to teach in Grades 6 through 12. In the 2nd year, MUSE participants will most likely teach fulltime while completing requirements for the master’s degree. Completion of the master’s degree requires students to complete a year-long seminar designed to “teach students how to conduct teacher research by defining a question or

issue, collecting and analyzing data, and writing results of the research. A faculty advisor is assigned during the 2nd year to provide support to students.

### **Summary**

Exploring how and why university-based urban ATP programs institute urban teacher preparation is a key part of this dissertation and is critical to understanding how they are impacting staffing needs as perceived by Title I urban school principals. Table 2 provides a summary of the common features and components of the university-based urban ATP programs discussed in this work. Additionally, the documents from the universities were compared to the needs and challenges expressed by the principals who participated in this study. This comparison is displayed in Table 3.

Totally immersing program candidates into urban schools and communities appeared to be a central focus of many of the university-based urban ATP programs highlighted in this study. Support is provided in multiple formats to ensure that prospective teachers are aware of teaching responsibilities and potential challenges. Engagement in reflective teaching seems to be another central component of the urban ATP programs mentioned in this study. In all, many of the study participants' desires for teacher preparation programs designed for Title I urban schools are being addressed by program leaders.

This study explored Title I elementary school principals' perspectives on preparing teachers for Title I urban schools. A cross-case analysis was used to identify and represent commonalities and differences in participants' responses. I focused on illuminating the voices and experiences of each participant. Collectively, their stories represent the following seven themes:



Table 2

*Document Analysis of University-Based Urban ATPs*

Commonalities	Unique Aspects of the Programs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer master's degree &amp; teacher credentialing</li> <li>• Offer programs from 11 months to 2 years</li> <li>• Attract primarily career changers</li> <li>• Require prior experience working with children</li> <li>• Provide mentors</li> <li>• Require the passing of state exams</li> <li>• Offer experiences related to or courses about urban communities and urban students and their families</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on addressing the educational inequities between advantaged students and disadvantaged students</li> <li>• Require year-long residencies</li> <li>• Provide advisories and professional learning community structures</li> <li>• Offer action-based research projects</li> <li>• Have community service requirements</li> <li>• Require immersion in communities and schools where the students live</li> </ul>

Table 3

*Title I Urban School Staffing Needs & University-Based Urban ATP Components*

Title I Principals' Needs	Program Components
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify program candidates who have a sincere interest in Title I urban schools</li> <li>• Provide prospective teachers with experiences that expose them to the realities of urban communities and schools</li> <li>• Extend student-teaching experiences, ideally by 1 year</li> <li>• Create collaborative relationships between Title I school staff and university professors</li> <li>• Design curriculum to broaden teachers' understanding of issues related to urban students', their families, and their communities</li> <li>• Assess prospective teachers' dispositions, attitudes, and beliefs about teaching in urban schools</li> <li>• Provide ongoing support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review statement of purpose or personal narrative submitted for admission to ATP program</li> <li>• Expect candidates to have prior experience working with children</li> <li>• Require year-long residencies or extended field experiences</li> <li>• Offer coursework on multiculturalism, diversity, and issues related to urban students and their communities</li> <li>• Mandate community service in urban areas</li> <li>• Provide immersion experiences in urban schools and in the communities where their students live</li> <li>• Create support systems that assess teachers' commitment and disposition as well as their readiness to teach urban students</li> </ul>

- *What Is Urban Teacher Preparation?*
- *Wearing the Label Title I Urban Schools;*
- *New Teachers, Unfamiliar Environments;*
- *Preparing Teachers to Teach in Title I Schools;*
- *Support for Candidates, Support for Teachers;*
- *Are Teachers Ready for Title I Urban Schools? and*
- *Selecting Candidates for Urban ATP Programs.*

The results of this research revealed that the participants agreed in several areas. First, the need for a university-based program focused on preparing teachers for Title I urban schools was noted as significantly important by all participants. They clearly articulated differences in the challenges and needs of Title I urban schools and non-Title I affluent schools. The principals contended that teachers in Title I urban schools have to work harder and differently than do teachers in affluent non-Title I schools. From their perspectives, universities have an obligation to ready teachers for these environments, and urban ATP programs should provide opportunities for program candidates to work in Title I schools and urban communities while enrolled in their programs. All principals indicated that Title I urban schools have a uniqueness to them requiring teachers who work there to have a certain disposition toward and attitude about working with children in poverty. The mission statements, philosophies, or goals of all of the university-based urban ATP programs reviewed for this study in some way emphasize a need to address educational inequities and prepare teachers to meet the needs of diverse populations, which are often underserved, less fortunate minority student populations.

Second, the participants agreed that program candidates should have coursework and training focused on specific issues related to urban communities, urban students, and the students' families. Course outlines from some university-based urban ATP programs detail classes that students in their programs are required to take, which address multiculturalism, diversity, and urban issues. Third, principals suggested that challenges with staffing in Title I schools are related to misconceptions that individuals have about Title I urban schools. They stated that the negative images in the media do not reflect the realities of daily occurrences in all urban schools. The images reportedly influence teachers' employment decisions. Teachers often migrate away from Title I urban schools, opting instead for schools with less challenging environments.

Fourth, study participants asserted that very little variation existed in the support offered to alternatively prepared teachers and teachers trained through traditional 4-year university programs. Likewise, principals did not convey differences in the performances of the two groups. They expressed that a teacher who attended a traditional 4-year COE program who had student-teaching experiences and coursework on teaching pedagogies would be more aware of school and classroom situations than individuals who had attended ATP programs. However, because principals felt that the nuances of Title I schools placed certain expectations on teachers, they stated that all teachers new to Title I schools would need assistance.

Fifth, the participants asserted that individuals who want to teach in urban schools must possess a passion for teaching and have a sincere desire to improve the educational experiences of children in poverty. Study participants suggested that urban ATP program leaders should assess whether a candidate has the disposition necessary for teaching

urban children in Title I schools during the screening process. A review of candidates' personal narratives or statements of purpose, their previous experience working with children, and an assessment of their understanding of Title I schools or urban environments were mentioned as means by which to assess a candidate's interest. At least one university assessed program candidates' disposition for teaching in urban environments during the student-teaching phase of the program. Additionally, study participants suggested that an assessment of program candidates' readiness for urban schools should be a collaborative effort. Feedback from principals, professors, supervising teachers, and other individuals who support the student-teacher was suggested.

Sixth, study participants agreed that teachers new to Title I urban school environments will experience the greatest challenges with classroom management specifically pertaining to student behavior. Their second greatest challenge will be connecting and communicating with parents. Additionally, two principals felt that new teachers must have strong content knowledge, whereas the other two principals thought that pedagogical skills were more important for new teachers.

The review of public documents illustrated that work is being conducted at some university-based ATP programs to address the needs of Title I urban schools. Some of those efforts consist of providing their program candidates with experiences in urban areas, offering total-immersion experiences in urban school environments, creating curricula and professional communities that focus on the realities of urban communities and families, and most importantly using processes to identify individuals who have a passion for working with children in urban areas. There appears to be congruence

between the staffing and preparation needs perceived by Title I elementary school principals and work that is occurring on some college campuses. Various efforts are being made by these universities to prepare teachers and improve students' academic opportunities and performance. The next chapter will offer a discussion on the findings, implications of this work, and recommendations for future research.

## CHAPTER 5

### DISCUSSION

As noted by Donaldson (2009) and NCTAF (1996), teacher quality largely influences the academic progress of students. Therefore, preparing teachers for schools with the most disadvantaged, marginalized children has become a focus of several colleges and universities. COEs have included urban alternative teacher pathways to increase the availability of teachers trained specifically to work with urban student populations (Berry, Montgomery, Curtis, et al., 2008; Freedman & Appleman, 2009). The voices of four Title I elementary school principals have been illuminated in this qualitative study to identify what they perceive as the critical aspects of preparing teachers for Title I urban schools.

This chapter will provide a discussion on the results of conversations held with the principals as well as the literature and documents reviewed for this research. The discussion will address the research questions guiding this study: 1. What skills and knowledge can best prepare new teachers for working in Title I urban schools? 2. What type of preservice or internship experiences should prospective teachers have prior to becoming the teacher of record in Title I urban schools? 3. What admission and selection criteria should be considered by university-based urban ATP program leaders for accepting candidates who will likely work in Title I urban schools? 4. How should university-based urban ATP program leaders assess the readiness of program completers for Title I urban schools? 5. What support structures are needed from university-based

urban ATP programs for prospective teachers of Title I urban schools? 6. In what ways, if any, should the training differ for teachers who work in non-Title I high socioeconomic low-minority schools and teachers who work in Title I low-socioeconomic high-minority schools? Following the discussion, implications of this study as well as recommendations for future research will be shared.

The voices of principals are often absent in discussions about the educational-reform initiatives established to address their schools' needs; their perspectives may offer valuable insight into school improvement efforts (Miller et al., 2006). Accordingly, the goal of this dissertation was to address this gap by providing principals from Title I elementary schools a space to share their interests in, concerns about, and suggestions for preparing teachers for students in poverty in urban areas.

## **Research Questions**

### **Research Question 1**

What skills and knowledge can best prepare new teachers for working in Title I urban schools?

According to the study participants, new teachers in Title I urban schools must first understand the challenges that many children in poverty in urban areas may encounter outside of school. The principals posited that in addition to prospective teachers' need to grasp an understanding of the Title I students who they will teach, they need to assess themselves in relation to those students. A mismatch can exist between the personal experiences of prospective teachers and the lives of their students (Garmon, 2005). Gallego's (2001) work recognized that the teaching force in the United States is overwhelmingly monocultural, though our student populations are increasingly diverse.



Therefore, she expressed that “teacher educators must provide preservice teachers with opportunities to interact with the communities and children representative of those they are likely to teach” (p. 312). Garmon (2005) also identified the gap between teachers and students from urban areas. He focused on factors that influence the disposition of teachers that can prohibit them from being successful with urban students. He suggested that teachers with backgrounds different than their urban students, but who are open to new ideas and are aware of their own beliefs and attitudes, are able to critically examine themselves and exhibit sensitivity toward children of different cultures. Catapano (2006), who worked with a program to ready student-teachers for urban schools, shared why some student-teachers refused positions in urban schools. Students told her that

they could not work in this setting every day because they did not think that they have the skills for meeting the challenges of working with the children and families on a daily basis. They think that they can provide children with the academic information that they need to be successful, however, they recognize that they need other skills to be able to meet the needs of the children. They recognize that working in an urban setting will challenge them to support both the child and the family, if the child is to be successful. (p. 83)

The ability of teachers to navigate between their students and their students’ home environments was recognized by the Title I school principals as an essential function of teachers’ work. Hence, this is a skill requiring optimal development through appropriate exposure. Garmon (2005) stated that a challenge exists in helping some teachers recognize their misinterpretations and misunderstanding of underprivileged children, which can hinder their success with those students.

The ability of prospective teachers to become more aware of and sensitive to cultural differences between themselves and urban children could consequently influence their ability to communicate with parents and establish rapport with children. To this point, Burant and Kirby (2002) stated that preservice experiences in teacher education programs typically limit interaction between student-teachers and parents. They suggested that

interactions with parents may confront beliefs about diversity and challenge limited, middle-class assumptions regarding the forms that parental involvement in schools should take, helping preservice teachers imagine roles for parents beyond those of making cupcakes for bake sales and serving as room mothers (Foster & Loven, 1992). Developing relationships with parents and community members from diverse groups may also teach important lessons about the complex intersections of race, class, gender, and structural material realities that impede family involvement in schools. Further, extending practicums into communities may assist preservice teachers in looking at families and communities as “zones of possibility” (Moll & Greenberg, 1990), or key resources for extending curriculum, rather than impediments for learning. (p. 562)

Burant and Kirby’s assumptions addressed the type of knowledge and skills that study participants conveyed would best prepare prospective teachers for Title I urban schools. These assumptions could help future teachers of Title I schools remove potential barriers of communication between parents and teachers and create opportunities to connect classroom learning to the lives of urban students.

As the participants discussed the need for urban teacher preparation, their perceptions of the negative depictions of urban schools seemed to conflict with their realities of staffing challenges. Though they seemed to vehemently reject the negative stereotypes, sometimes the stereotypes were the leverage needed to emphasize the differences between urban, impoverished and suburban, affluent schools. Further, the noted differences supported the principals' perspectives of the need for urban teacher preparation.

For instance, all of the research participants described Title I urban schools as complex environments requiring their staff to possess certain skills, dispositions, and attitudes. They further explained the many challenges that students in urban areas may face and why some teachers choose employment in what they termed "less challenging environments." Michael indicated that people think kids in urban schools will be throwing chairs, but he later added that urban students' respect is not automatically bestowed upon you just because you are the teacher or principal; it must be earned. In a latter conversation, Michael stated that a parent might "curse a teacher" because that is how the parent is used to communicating. These examples could affirm stereotypes that parents of students in urban schools are difficult to work with and that their communication is poor.

At times, the participants communicated that urban children are just like any other children, but at other times, they presented stark contrasts between children of poverty in urban areas and students in affluent areas. Michael suggested that a certain type of psychology has to be used with some students that may be different from what their teachers learn in college. He contended that a little more force may be necessary when

communicating with certain students. This position could support beliefs that students in urban schools need far more classroom management because they are more difficult to manage than their suburban counterparts. When discussing the need for high-quality teachers who can best meet the staffing needs of Title I urban schools, Reba asked in a defensive tone, “What type of teacher do you think we need in an urban school? We need a good teacher.” She posited that a good teacher is a good teacher in any school. This viewpoint is later contradicted as she explained that teachers in urban schools have to do a little bit more than what may be required of them in non-Title I suburban schools. In fact, she stated that most teachers don’t want to give the extra effort that is required in Title I urban schools. Reba added that if teachers are not committed to giving more of themselves, they should not work with children in Title I urban schools. I found this duality of expression among the participants interesting and worthy of further investigation in future research.

The research participants indicated that classroom management was the most significant challenge for new teachers in Title I schools. According to research conducted by Simonsen, Fairbanks, Briesch, Myers, and Sugai (2008), there are several classroom-management practices that are helpful to teachers. The authors conducted a review of literature on evidence-based classroom-management strategies and identified five critical features:

- (a) maximize structure; (b) post, teach, review, monitor, and reinforce expectations; (c) actively engage students in observable ways; (d) use a continuum of strategies for responding to appropriate behaviors; and (e) use a continuum of strategies to respond to inappropriate behaviors. (p. 353)

Simonsen et al. noted that schools must determine how the strategies outlined above can best meet the individual needs of classroom teachers based on factors contextually and culturally relevant to student populations. Thus, efforts to educate teachers about and provide experiences with children of poverty in urban areas are critical to their training and development in university-based urban ATP programs.

## **Research Question 2**

What type of preservice or internship experiences should prospective teachers have prior to becoming the teacher of record in Title I urban schools?

Much attention is being given to how preservice experiences are constructed for prospective teachers (Burant & Kirby, 2002; Grossman, 2010; NCATE, 2010; Sawchuk, 2010). According to the Title I school principals, preservice training is one of the most critical aspects in the preparation of teachers. All of the study participants advocated for extensive field experiences that (a) provide total immersion into Title I urban schools, (b) include activities in urban communities, and (c) extend the amount of time student-teachers spend in the preservice stage. The principals' interviews suggested that the activities that occur during a teacher's preservice stage are crucial experiences to have before becoming the teacher of record.

NCATE (2010) recently commissioned a work that supports the principals' perspectives called the Report of The Blue Ribbon Panel on Clinical Preparation and Partnerships for Improved Student Learning. The NCATE Blue Ribbon Panel called for a shift from the status quo of teacher preparation programs that have not recognized the need for preservice teaching to advance to a more clinical approach in preparing teachers. Like the Title I elementary school principals, the NCATE Blue Ribbon Panel indicated

that academic coursework in teacher education programs is loosely aligned with actual school-based activities. Additionally, the panel's report revealed that though

new and experienced teachers repeatedly cite classroom-based experiences and student teaching as the most highly valued elements of their preparation, clinical practice remains the most ad hoc part of teacher education in many programs.

Most states require student teaching, the majority requiring somewhere between 10 and 14 weeks. (NCATE, 2010, p. 4)

The panel shared that student-teaching experiences vary drastically, from 1 year of clinical experience before a candidate becomes the teacher or record to no clinical experience at all.

NCATE's (2010) Blue Ribbon Panel also emphasized the importance of creating clinical experiences specifically for hard-to-staff schools. A matching model was suggested that would allow program candidates who are interested in working in high-need schools with the opportunity to select sites of interest 6 months prior to engaging in their field experience. The candidates would be interviewed by staff at participating clinical sites to determine if placement is a good fit for both the forthcoming interns and the schools. According to NCATE (2010), this process would adapt practices from the matching program facilitated by the American Association of Medical Colleges, which handles the placements of residents and interns at hospitals across the nation. Finally, the NCATE report stressed the importance of identifying schools that could best serve as clinical sites by closely examining the overall school environment and determining which master teachers will serve as mentors. The matching concept described above would allow for total immersion into urban schools and communities.

Gallego (2001) conducted a study to examine the benefits of allowing teacher education students a two-pronged approach to their preservice field experience. She proposed that students participate in the regular classroom student-teaching process and also assist in a community-based afterschool program. The intent of the program is for student-teachers to (a) examine how the two settings independent of one another challenge the teaching and learning process, (b) determine how strategies in the two settings could be used interchangeably, and (c) determine if the physical settings of each obstruct or benefit the teaching and learning process. Gallego emphasized that “without connections between the classroom, school, and local communities, classroom field experiences may work to strengthen preservice teachers’ stereotypes of children, rather than stimulate their examination (Cochran-Smith, 1995; Haberman & Post, 1992), and ultimately compromise teachers’ effectiveness in the classroom (Zeichner, 1996)” (p. 314).

To address these issues, Burant and Kirby (2005) identified a community-based field experience that created activities to enhance student-teachers’ knowledge and awareness of the communities in which their students lived. The activities ranged from conducting 2-hour expeditions in surrounding neighborhoods, to riding the school buses, to conducting interviews with local community members. One of the goals of the community-based field experience, which mirrors the perspectives of this study’s participants, was to allow student-teachers “to gain local community perspectives on critical educational issues studied in [their university] class” (p. 564).

### Research Question 3

What admission and selection criteria should be considered by university-based urban ATP program leaders for accepting candidates who will likely work in Title I urban schools?

Study participants insisted that the dispositions, attitudes, beliefs, and experiences of prospective teachers of Title I urban schools could influence their effectiveness with students. Most of the universities identified in this study required interested individuals to prepare a statement of purpose to communicate why they are interested in enrolling in the urban ATP program and why they are particularly interested in working with urban school children. In addition to statements of purpose, many urban ATP programs' application process explores the degree to which interested individuals have worked with children, and in some cases, in urban areas. At least one university specifically assessed dispositions for teaching at three stages of the program.

Interestingly, the study participants' perspectives about assessing program candidates' interest in and suitability for Title I urban schools resembled views expressed by Haberman (1995) approximately a decade and a half ago. Haberman suggested that selecting the appropriate candidates for children of poverty was far more critical than the training of prospective teachers: "My hunch is that selection is 80% of the matter" (para. 3).

Haberman (1995) contended that exemplary urban teachers are those who possess a certain ideology about working with students of poverty. He insisted that this ideology is an intrinsic characteristic or belief system that guides teachers' behaviors. Haberman conducted a series of interviews, which spanned over several decades, with teachers he



categorized as star urban teachers. From the interviews, he identified 14 functions of star urban teachers. His work is relevant to the findings of this study because the principals, much like Haberman, insisted that individuals who want to teach urban students must possess a passion for teaching, compassion toward children, and an understanding of how to establish relationships with urban students. Hence, universities may consider Haberman's functions and the perspectives of the Title I elementary school principals as guiding principles during the initial screening of candidates.

Also calling for changes in the selection process of teacher education candidates, NCATE's (2010) Blue Ribbon Panel insisted that teacher education programs "take into consideration not only test scores but key attributes that lead to effective teachers" (p. iii). NCATE has not specified what the actual criteria should be for admittance to teacher education programs, but their report suggested that a standard GPA should be used when considering candidates. In contrast, the Title I elementary school principals participating in this study agreed that GPA is not a strong determinant of how effective teachers will be in their school settings, so it is not a critical component of the selection process. NCATE shared that "some institutions define a broader range of attributes for each of their candidates by seeking information on such qualities as leadership, persistence, commitment, and facility with oral and written communications among the factors they judge in selecting applicants" (p. 18). Most of these qualities were deemed important to all of the principals interviewed for this study.

Additionally, both Haberman (1995) and the study participants suggested that candidates be observed during summer-teaching programs or that they volunteer in urban schools before actually working in urban school classrooms. Perhaps these activities lend

themselves in previewing a program candidate's sincerity, motivation, and commitment to working with children of poverty.

Haberman (1995) asserted that star urban teachers demonstrate a degree of persistence in making learning an engaging and interesting process for all children. He described star teachers as those who understand that they inevitably will have children with difficult behaviors or low skill levels, yet they are relentless in their pursuits to meet the needs of all children. As these teachers forge ahead to create the best learning opportunities for children, Haberman stated that they are committed to protecting learners and learning. From his perspective, this protection emerged from star urban teachers' personal involvement in activities outside of school that gave them a sense of purpose and well-being as they do work for others. As a result of their involvement with such activities, star urban teachers tended to be enthusiastic about helping children understand the purpose of learning, which Haberman referred to as the application of generalizations. He posited that teachers must use a variety of sources to improve their learning and development, and, as a result, to improve the learning of children. "Stars can explain what their day-to-day work adds up to; they have a grasp not only of the learning principles that undergird their work but also of the long-range knowledge goals that they are helping their students achieve" (Haberman, 1995, Application of Generalizations section, para. 2).

#### **Research Question 4**

How should university-based urban ATP program leaders assess the readiness of program completers for Title I urban schools?

Conventional methods for assessing preservice teachers' readiness were discussed by all of the research participants. The methods included conducting classroom observations, holding reflective sessions, and gathering feedback from both university supervisors and cooperating teachers. The methods offered did not appear to differ from strategies used in traditional 4-year COE programs. In addition to conventional methods of assessing student-teachers' performance, study participants seemed to place emphasis on ensuring that a prospective teacher is comfortable in a Title I school environment and with its students. Providing teachers with structured opportunities for reflection and assessing their dispositions to teaching may provide insight about their level of comfort. I found that some universities are attuned to the importance of having teachers engage in reflection and assess their dispositions to teaching.

The UTEP leaders at Indian University Northwest developed a conceptual framework around an ideology that they refer to as reflective professional that requires student-teachers to examine their teaching practices and keep a journal of these reflections. The reflections from students' journals are shared during scheduled meetings with university supervisors and cooperating teachers. Additionally, UTEP students are required to complete a personal assessment of their teaching disposition at different stages in their program; their mentors also complete a dispositions observation form. (See Appendix D for the forms used by UTEP.)

Similarly, students in Harvard University's TEP maintain reflective journals and participate in advisories. During advisory, student-teachers explore teaching and learning through ethnographic practices at the school sites, observing classroom students and conducting case studies of them. Student-teachers at the same school sites are grouped

together and meet weekly to discuss school-related issues, support each other, and synthesize information. Leaders of the TEP program asserted that they

strongly believe that learning how to reflect on practice, and learning how to change practice as a result of reflection (praxis), is a critical skill of an effective teacher. We view reflection as a signature characteristic of our program graduates (Harvard University 2011, Advisories section, para. 2).

In assessing teacher readiness, the principals agreed that the evaluation process should be a collaboration between all individuals supporting the student-teachers, including their mentors and the principals themselves. I did not find evidence that anyone from either of the university ATP programs solicited feedback specifically from principals, which could have helped to determine whether student-teachers met the principals' standards of performance for their schools.

### **Research Question 5**

What support structures are needed from university-based urban ATP programs for prospective teachers of Title I urban schools?

Support structures for preservice teachers could help them understand fundamental practices within classrooms and schools and assess their performance during student-teaching (Darling-Hammond & Baratz-Snowden, 2005). Most university-based urban ATP programs described supporting activities as assigning mentors to student-teachers, holding seminars for student-teachers to collaborate with one another, reviewing reflective journal entries, and requiring cooperating teachers and university supervisors to complete some type of feedback forms about each student-teacher's performance. A few methods noted in the research and used in university-based urban ATP programs to help

student-teachers overcome some of their limitations and apprehensions to teaching include analyzing lesson plans, student-teacher work samples, video-taped classes, teaching portfolios, reflective journals, and case studies (Darling-Hammond, 2006b).

Student-teachers in some programs also have support through professional learning communities (PLCs). The value of collaborating with other teachers is described by Darling-Hammond (2006b):

In contrast to the view of the lone teacher gaining a basket of knowledge for teaching that is complete and self-contained at the end of teacher education, . . . [PLCs] view professional teaching as inherently collective, something to be developed with colleagues who are partners in learning and problem solving. (p. 109)

These efforts are a means for helping prospective teachers learn from other teachers' practices and increase their knowledge for teaching. However, as Darling-Hammond suggested, supporting and assessing prospective teachers should not default to examining whether they understand routine tasks associated with the job of teaching. Rather, the focus should be on how well they understand how to create lessons and learning environments within the context of student populations. She stated,

In contrast to earlier beliefs that teaching would be effective if teachers mastered a set of generic teaching behaviors appropriate to all settings and subjects, recent research has made it clear that all teaching and all learning are shaped by the contexts in which they occur—by the nature of the subject matter, the goals of instruction, the individual experiences, interests, and understandings of learners

and teachers, and the settings within which teaching and learning take place. (p. 115)

The Title I school principals understood that their work and their teachers' work is to advance learning and educational opportunities for children in urban communities. They conveyed that the support offered to student-teachers should include structures or activities that would expand preservice teachers' understanding of how they teach urban students, what they teach urban students, and why they teach urban students. Their perspectives align with the missions of some university-based urban ATP programs, to address issues of inequity and social injustice that negatively influence learning and growth opportunities for marginalized populations.

To develop prospective teachers' awareness of the social and educational inequities that impact children of poverty, some programs are teaching prospective teachers how to advocate on behalf of these children and their families. Catapano (2006) examined a program that prepared teachers for urban school environments using a service-learning advocacy strategy. The goal of the program was to help teachers understand cultures different from their own and the unique issues evident for people in poverty. The use of "mentoring strategies, such as modeling reflective thinking and problem-solving strategies with the pre-service teachers, are included in the teacher preparation program to support pre-service teachers in applying these strategies to situations in the classroom" (Catapano, 2006, p. 85). As a result, student-teachers "become classroom teachers who can make changes that impact children and their families by looking for solutions to problems with families and accessing support through community resources" (Catapano, 2006, p. 85).

From the study participants' perspectives, supervising professors from urban ATP programs, like their student-teachers, should be acquainted with the communities in which their students will be placed. The Title I elementary school principals expressed that university staff are often unfamiliar with urban areas, which could compromise their ability to make informed assessments about their program candidates' readiness for Title I urban schools. Extending this argument, the research participants stated that university professors do not spend sufficient time with student-teachers at their placement sites. The study participants stated that two or three visits during a 10 to 15 week period does not allow for in-depth assessments of program candidates' ability to plan lessons, deliver instruction, and interact with students. The principals expected university professors to spend a significant amount of time at local schools supporting their student-teachers by observing how they transfer theory into practice and connect learning to their students' personal experiences.

The principals also stated that support for candidates should be a collaboration between local school personnel and university staff. Michael stated that university staff should consider relocating urban ATP programs to local school sites. This concept is referred to in the literature as the professional development school (PDS) model (Castle, Fox, & Souder, 2006; Klingner, Leftwich, Garderen, & Hernandez, 2004; M. Levine, 2002). A PDS is a partnership between teacher preparation programs and local schools. In the partnership, the responsibility and resources for developing teachers is shared, especially during the clinical component of preservice training. University supervisors, who bring research and inquiry-based experience, and local school staff, who provide practical school-based experience, serve as mentors for preservice teachers who work as

junior faculty for approximately one year. According to M. Levine (2002), PDS school students in Texas, Michigan, and West Virginia showed substantial gains in their academic performance or outperformed students from non-PDS schools (see also Klingner et al., 2004). M. Levine also noted that teachers prepared in PDS schools indicated that they learned better or were more effective than teachers from traditional 4-year teacher preparation programs.

The PDS model described by Klingner et al. (2004) provided a structure of support desired by the Title I school principals. According to Klingner et al., the urban PDS was established as a reform measure to improve student academic outcomes. They posited that with the PDS model

university faculty members spend much more time in K-12 schools, gaining valuable knowledge of the realities of teaching in public schools. On the other hand, school personnel gain useful information about the latest research-based methods and are much more involved in the design and implementation of teacher preparation programs. (p. 293)

The PDS model called for continuous professional development for prospective teachers and provided a professor-in-residence from the university who conducted courses or activities at the school once a week.

Various methods for supporting student-teachers have been identified. The options ranged from providing mentors, to establishing PLCs, to developing PDS models. Notably, all study participants felt that continuous support, extending into the first year or two of teaching, was needed for all new teachers.



### Research Question 6

In what ways, if any, should the training differ for teachers who work in non-Title I high-socioeconomic low-minority schools and teachers who work in Title I low-socioeconomic high-minority schools?

According to responses from the research participants, training for teachers who aspire to work in Title I low-socioeconomic high-minority schools should differ from training provided to teachers who will work in non-Title I low-minority high-socioeconomic schools. From my perspective, evidence supporting this research question was embedded in participants' responses about the needs of urban ATP and the differences in selection criteria of a traditional 4-year COE program and an urban ATP program.

The study participants also emphasized unique experiences that prospective teachers should have in urban environments during preservice training. They repeatedly articulated that Title I urban schools are unique environments with varying nuances. Hence, prospective teachers of Title I urban schools need specialized preparation for urban schools. A few of their responses illustrate their perspectives on this issue.

Gloria declared,

I think because of the challenges that teachers face in teaching students of poverty, Title I schools force you to [consider] socioeconomic levels, . . . especially during economic times like today. So, yeah, you do need to make sure they have the skill [and that] they have the desire and the passion to teach in settings like this. They have to have the knowledge. I agree there should be something [for Title I teachers] that . . . [is] just a little bit different from

[teachers] teaching in a setting that you don't have as many challenges.

Don added,

Just because you're ready to put people in the program and at the same time put them in front of kids doesn't mean they are ready. Now, I went through it, but I was thrown in the line of fire quickly, so at times I wasn't fully prepared.

Michael also shared the sentiments of Don and Gloria. He underscored the necessity of providing specific training to teachers in urban schools. He stated,

There needs to be an engagement or a total immersion in those environments after [the teachers] have been provided with specific academic instruction on understanding certain cultures and after they have been provided with specific instruction on pedagogies. Then there needs to be some time that they spend actually practicing within the urban environments prior to being cut loose.

Sometimes when there are specific areas like math [and] science, we tend to kind of rush them through because we need those fields. Really, some programs just kind of have them on a fast track, and that's not effective because you have the knowledge and you try to give the knowledge, but you don't have the knowledge on how to teach students of certain cultures or certain urban environments. So, going back to your question, they need more time in cultural sensitivity and understanding pedagogy.

Reba insisted that teacher preparation for Title I schools must include several visits to urban school environments. This appeared to be of the utmost importance to all of the study participants. The deliberate assignments in and engagement with urban communities along with curriculum specifically designed to enhance teachers'

understanding of children of low-socioeconomic status from various cultural backgrounds with diverse needs are distinct features of urban teacher preparation. According to the principals, these features highlight the differences in training needed for prospective teachers of Title I low-socioeconomic high-minority schools and are most likely not the central focus of programs preparing teachers to work in non-Title I low-minority high-socioeconomic schools.

### **Implications**

The findings from this work demonstrate that Title I school principals have a vested interest in how prospective teachers are trained for their school environments. The study participants demonstrated a clear understanding of the staffing needs of Title I schools, the challenges they face in selecting teachers, the problems that most novice teachers will encounter, and the strategies needed to ensure teachers are both ready for and successful in urban schools. Therefore, this dissertation offers fertile ground for colleges and universities who have urban ATP programs or other teacher education programs with an urban focus to cultivate relationships with principals in Title I urban schools. The study participants suggested that Title I schools are complex but rife with growth and development opportunities for new teachers.

This work also brings to the fore the need for greater collaboration between universities and local schools serving as sites for student-teacher placements. The study participants appeared to welcome opportunities that allow university professors to familiarize or reacquaint themselves with Title I urban school communities, teachers, and students. The principals agreed that it is important for those who are guiding and supporting teacher candidates to have exposure to the realities of students from urban

areas. Hence, PDS models may be an option for COEs that have not utilized them in the past.

As researchers explore the reasons for high teacher turnover rates in urban schools, university-based urban ATP programs appear to attract individuals with sincere interests in working in those school environments. According to Talbert-Johnson (2006) when individuals have a certain disposition toward their work, they are likely to be more satisfied and remain in the profession. Thus, selection processes that call for candidate explanations of why they are interested in diffusing educational inequities and working with marginalized populations appear to be helpful.

ATP has long received criticism for being a quick fix or fast track for producing teachers unprepared for the daunting task of teaching (Berry, Montgomery, & Snyder, 2008). Some of the criticism stems from allegations that ATP programs offer extremely condensed field experience, if any at all, that does not provide prospective teachers sufficient practical hands-on experiences. Additionally, conventional 4-year COE teacher preparation programs have been accused of not providing adequate training and preparation for novices entering the teaching force (A. Levine, 2006; Walsh & Jacobs, 2007). There are also accusations that a gap exists between coursework and field experiences, especially for prospective teachers placed in high-need schools with at-risk populations in urban areas.

This dissertation highlights the efforts underway in colleges and universities across the United States that challenge the negative accusations and allegations of ATP programs. In fact, the work being conducted in some university-based urban ATPs, as demonstrated in this dissertation, can inform how other ATP programs from regional

education agencies, school districts, nonprofit organizations, and for-profit companies address the staffing concerns of high-need schools in urban areas. A landscape has been created by these university-based urban ATP programs that is worthy of more exploration and that can serve as a template for creating new programs or revamping existing programs.

The results and findings from this dissertation indicate that important work appears to be happening in universities and colleges that create teacher preparation pathways to address the staffing needs of Title I urban schools, yet more work is needed to better define principals' roles when urban ATP programs are designed, implemented, and assessed. I was unable to identify specific efforts made by college or university leaders to include principals' voices in program design. Although one research participant clearly articulated his responsibilities during the preservice phase, most of the participants did not convey that they had much involvement at all. Additionally, the specific role of the principal during the student-teaching phase and upon program completion remains unclear.

Further, I did not uncover any evidence that university-based urban-program leaders are having dialogues with Title I urban school principals regarding what they consider to be the standards of performance for future teachers. The extent to which program leaders are familiarizing themselves with or are aware of those aspects of teaching that are most important to Title I elementary school principals is uncertain. Gaining a broader understanding of those areas of teaching that student-teachers need to master upon program completion could inform the work in university-based urban ATP programs.

Additionally, this dissertation revealed that Title I elementary school principals think that new teachers' greatest challenge is classroom management. The principals suggested that teachers utilize techniques that allow them to establish rapport with students, understand differences (cultural or racial) between themselves and their students, and learn how to merge classroom learning with students' real-life situations. The principals' perspectives about classroom management revealed a recurring theme discussed in extant research in this area of teaching. Literature indicates that a relationship exists between students' behaviors and their academic performance. Hence, one could infer that an indicator for becoming an effective, successful teacher is to master effective classroom-management techniques and to utilize appropriate strategies and judgment when responding to students' behaviors and needs. However, as this study revealed, conversations associating classroom-management practices as a catalyst for becoming an effective classroom teacher are not always present. Therefore, I suggest that as conversations about effective teachers continue, more attention needs to be dedicated to exploring and sharing how effective, successful teachers define, implement, and sustain positive, effective classroom management.

Lastly, the findings from this research indicate that urban ATP programs should ascertain whether they are providing enough coursework, learning opportunities, and field experiences to familiarize future teachers with the realities of urban communities, urban schools, and urban students. The extent to which university-based programs can provide the aforementioned needs and integrate theory with practice seems to be invaluable in readying teachers for Title I urban schools.

## **Recommendations**

The purpose of this dissertation is to advance research that values the perspectives of principals, particularly research that is related to issues in urban schools. As stated by Glazerman, Tuttle, and Baxter (2006), principals are responsible for identifying, training, observing, and supporting teachers; therefore, they have unique and invaluable insight about the educational initiatives that aim to meet the needs of their teachers, students, and school community. This study is limited in scope, but it may affect how work is conducted and evaluated in university-based urban ATP programs. To extend this study, future research should consider the following questions:

1. How do urban ATP programs influence teacher self-efficacy?

Self-efficacy, as defined by Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2007), is how individuals assess their capabilities of performing in certain environments and on certain tasks. Perceptions of self often influence the effort and perseverance exerted by people to accomplish goals, particularly when faced with challenging situations or setbacks. Successful experiences and outcomes can produce higher levels of self-efficacy. Therefore, exploring how urban ATP programs impact teachers' self-efficacy could further expand this work.

2. How are urban ATP programs influencing teacher retention in hard-to-staff schools in urban areas?

As indicated by some of the study participants, they want people with a disposition and passion for working in urban school areas. Additionally, they contended that teacher retention is an area of concern. Some programs, like the University of California Center X TEP, have conducted longitudinal research that monitors program

completers' commitments to remain in urban education. Center X graduates have been identified as having a 90% retention rate in their 1st year in education and a 95% retention rate in their 2nd year (Quartz et al., 2004). More research is needed to determine what other programs are doing to obtain this critical data.

3. Who do preservice teachers in urban ATP programs think have the greatest influence on their preparation and why?

One of the study participants, Don, indicated that his mentor had a tremendous impact on his decision to continue teaching. Findings from this research indicate that the specific role principals assume with preservice teachers is uncertain and perhaps nonexistent. However, several individuals such as school-based cooperating teachers, faculty supervisors, advisors, or fellow classmates interact with preservice teachers. As preservice teachers become acculturated to their school sites, they are likely to become involved with other school-based personnel. Understanding who influences preservice teachers in urban ATP programs and how participants are influenced could help to ensure that they get the support they need.

4. What experiences do preservice teachers in urban ATP programs think have the greatest influence on readying them for urban school environments and why?

As evidenced in the literature and emphasized by participants in this study, preservice experiences are critical to a teacher's preparation. Urban ATP program leaders establish curricula and activities that they think will most benefit prospective teachers for urban areas, and the principals in this study voiced what they believe to be important during this stage of teacher development. Future work could amplify the



voices of urban ATP program completers to determine what aspects of their preservice prepared them for the realities of Title I urban school environments.

### **Summary**

Assessing principals' perspectives regarding teacher preparation appears to be uncharted territory that could provide rich data for institutions of higher learning as they develop programs to meet staffing needs of Title I urban schools. In the selection of its Blue Ribbon Panel, NCATE showed evidence of recognizing the importance of including the voices of stakeholders from school districts. Among its many panel members, teachers and leaders from preschool to 12th grade were represented.

Many of the needs and interests expressed by Title I school principals appear to be supported by some university-based urban ATP programs and illustrated in relevant literature. The inclusion of principals' voices in the development of teacher preparation programs has surfaced, but does not appear prevalent in either the literature or university programs.

From the Title I elementary school principals' perspective, the activities imbedded in the student-teaching phase are most critical in the development of their prospective teachers. What they presented appears to be an inevitable ecological relationship—environments have an impact on individuals and individuals have an influence on their environments (Copeland, 2001). The attitudes, beliefs, knowledge, and dispositions possessed by preservice teachers and the unique demands of Title I school environments have an indelible impression on one another. Therefore, identifying methods that prepare prospective teachers for Title I schools is of grave importance.

Recent research has been conducted in the area of urban teacher preparation. Boggess (2008) produced research that examined how two urban school districts located in Chicago and Boston engaged urban teacher residencies (UTR) as a means to increase teacher retention in their own districts. His research findings indicated that school district leaders in urban areas attributed high rates of turnover to the inadequate, unrealistic preparation of teachers provided by traditional COEs. Boggess's focus was on the purpose of the established partnerships between the school districts and UTRs and less about teacher education reform. He was interested in examining how the partnerships explained unique ideas about teacher quality related to children of poverty in high-need schools. He focused on the assertion that teacher quality is associated with the achievement gap between advantaged and disadvantaged children.

Additionally, Kuter (2005) identified that many 1st-year teachers in the Rochester City School District did not feel adequately prepared for the urban school environments in which they worked. As a result, she conducted research which explored the opinions of university faculty, mentor teachers, interns, and administrators regarding new teachers' preparation. The intent of her work was to determine if new teachers were perceived as prepared for urban schools and how new teachers perceived their preparedness.

No single voice can be all telling and all knowing in conversations and initiatives with educational reform, but the voice of the principal, which remains largely untapped, may add value to those conversations and future plans. Principals are charged with creating environments that are conducive to educating children. In doing so, they must consider all of the factors that influence children's academic growth and opportunities. Hence, principals must think critically, work strategically, and select wisely when

choosing teachers, who undoubtedly have a tremendous impact on children's educational experiences and academic advancement. When designing their teacher preparation programs, urban ATP program leaders may benefit from consulting with Title I school principals to ensure that the most appropriate teachers are prepared for the children who need them most.

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## APPENDIXES

### APPENDIX A

#### Informed Consent

Title: Title I School Principals Perceptions' of Teacher Readiness: University-based

Alternative Teacher Preparation for Urban Schools (dissertation)

Principal Investigator: Dr. Richard Lakes

Student Investigator: Pamela Gayles

#### I. Purpose:

You are invited to participate in a research study. The purpose of the study is to investigate how university-based urban alternative teacher preparation programs are addressing the need to better prepare teachers for high-needs, urban schools. The intent of this research is to understand how the university programs, as an educational reform initiative, is meeting the needs of its stakeholders, principals. You are invited to participate because you are a principal of a Title I urban elementary school that has teachers who have completed a university-based alternative teacher preparation program focused on urban teacher development. Additionally, as a principal, you are primarily responsible for selecting, monitoring, and evaluating teachers at your school. A total of six participants will be recruited for this study. Participation will require a maximum of three hours of your time over a maximum of two sessions. This research will begin in late spring of 2010 and conclude by late summer 2010.

#### II. Procedures:

If you decide to participate, you will interviewed by Pamela Gayles. A digital recorder will be used to capture the interview. Because interviews are expected to take 1 to 1 ½ hours, the researcher will also take notes to assist with memory recall. Total participation will not exceed 3 hours. Each interview will be conducted at a location of mutual convenience. No compensation will be provided for participating in this study. The researcher will make final decisions about including various aspects of your interview. You will be asked to complete a brief questionnaire about your professional experience as an educator and work with urban schools. This research will conclude by summer 2010.

### III. Risks:

In this study, you will not encounter any more risks than you would in normal daily life activities.

### IV. Benefits:

Participation in this study may not benefit you personally. However, in participating, your work may be shared with others who may benefit. Overall, we hope to gain information about the preparation urban teachers need and are provided by exploring the perspectives of Title I, urban elementary school principals. Hence, we hope to gain understanding of the impact university-based alternative teacher preparation programs might have on urban school teacher readiness.

### V. Voluntary Participation and Withdrawal:

Participation in research is voluntary. You do not have to be in this study. If you decide to be in the study and change your mind, you have the right to drop out at any time. You may skip questions or stop participating at any time. Whatever you decide, you will not lose any benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

### VI. Confidentiality:

We will keep your records private to the extent allowed by law. Dr. Richard Lakes and Pamela Gayles will have access to the information you provide. Information may also be shared with those who make sure the study is done correctly (GSU Institutional Review Board, the Office for Human Research Protection (OHRP)). We will use your initials rather than your name on study records. The information you provide will be stored electronically on the researcher's home computers which are password protected. Any hard copies will be maintained in a locking file cabinet at the researcher's residence. All identifying information about participants such as informed consent documents and code sheets will be maintained in an area separate from interview data or other related information in a locking file cabinet at the researcher's residence. Your name and other facts that might point to you will not appear when we present this study or publish its results. The findings will be summarized and reported in group form. You will not be identified personally.

### VII. Contact Persons:

Contact Dr. Richard Lakes at [REDACTED] or at [rlakes@gsu.edu](mailto:rlakes@gsu.edu) if you have questions about this study. You can also contact Pamela Gayles at [REDACTED] or at [pgayles1@student.gsu.edu](mailto:pgayles1@student.gsu.edu). If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a participant in this research study, you may contact Susan Vogtner in the Office of Research Integrity at [REDACTED] or [svogtner1@gsu.edu](mailto:svogtner1@gsu.edu).

### VIII. Copy of Consent Form to Subject:

We will give you a copy of this consent form to keep.

If you are willing to volunteer for this research and be audio recorded, please sign below.

---

Participant

---

Date

---

Principal Investigator or Researcher Obtaining Consent

---

Date

---

## APPENDIX B

### Interview Protocol for Participants

1. What are some of the staffing challenges of Title I, urban schools face?
2. What staffing challenges have you encountered at your school?
3. What are the first thoughts that come to mind when you hear the phrase “urban teacher preparation”?
4. Do you think urban teacher preparation is needed, why or why not?
5. What type of preparation is most critical for beginning teachers working in Title I urban schools?
6. Why do you think some teachers are more successful in urban schools than others?
7. What attributes of prospective teachers, if any, hinder their effectiveness in Title I, urban schools?
8. What attributes and characteristics of prospective teachers, if any, might contribute to their effectiveness in Title I, urban schools?
9. In what areas of teaching do new urban teachers have the greatest challenges in Title I urban schools?
10. What would an ideal pre-service or internship consist of for prospective Title I, urban teachers?
11. What training and preparation should be included in university-based urban alternative teacher preparation programs to enhance teacher readiness for Title I, urban schools?
12. What skills and knowledge can best prepare new teachers for working in Title I, urban schools?
13. What type of preservice or internship experiences should prospective teachers have prior to becoming the teacher of record in Title I, urban schools?
14. What admission and selection criteria should be considered by university-based urban alternative teacher preparation program leaders for accepting candidates who will likely work in Title I urban schools?
15. How should university-based urban alternative teacher preparation program leaders assess the readiness of program completers for Title I, urban schools?



16. What support structures are needed from university-based urban alternative teacher preparation programs for prospective teachers of Title I urban schools?
17. In what ways, if any, should the training differ for prospective teachers who will work in non-Title I, high socio-economic, low minority schools and teachers who work in Title I, low-socio-economic, high minority schools?
18. What differences, if any, exist between the performances of traditionally trained teachers and alternatively trained teachers in Title I urban schools?
19. Which is more critical to a teacher's success, pedagogical skills or content knowledge?
20. What support structures are needed from Title I school communities for novice teachers?

## APPENDIX C

### Coding Categories

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. academic background and selection criteria               | 15. pedagogy   |
| 2. admissions traditional vs alternative                    | 16. portrayal of Title I schools                                   |
| 3. admissions/selection criteria                            | 17. Prep for beginning teacher in Title I schs                     |
| 4. affluent vs Title I - teachers choices                   | 18. professors and urban school prep                               |
| 5. assessing teacher readiness                              | 19. staff perceptions of ATP teachers                              |
| 6. attributes hindering effectiveness                       | 20. staffing challenges  |
| 7. benefits to working in Title I                           | 21. teacher's responsibility to teach                              |
| 8. candidate personal experiences considered for admissions | 22. teacher of record  |
| 9. good teaching is good teaching                           | 23. teacher performance—traditional versus alternative             |
| 10. ideal pre-service/internship                            | 24. teacher success in title I                                     |
| 11. mentors   | 25. Title I school support   |
| 12. new teacher greatest challenges                         | 26. training and preparation needed                                |
| 13. overcoming stereotypes                                  | 27. university assessing candidates willingness to work in title I |
| 14. passion for teaching                                    |  |

- 28. university support for candidates
- 29. urban teacher focus
- 30. urban teacher prep defined
- 31. urban teacher prep needed

## APPENDIX D

### Questionnaire for Principals

Title I School Principals Perceptions' of Teacher Preparedness: University-based

Alternative Teacher Preparation for Urban Schools (dissertation)

**Researchers:** Richard Lakes, Ph.D. and Pamela Gayles—Georgia State University

**Purpose:** The purpose of this questionnaire is to gather demographic information about your professional experience and basic understanding of alternative teacher preparation.

This questionnaire will also be used to reveal your familiarity with urban school environments and staffing needs as related to the research topic.

Date:

---

Participant Name: Last \_\_\_\_\_

First \_\_\_\_\_

*(Please print)*

Gender: Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_ Age: 25-35 \_\_\_\_\_ 36-46 \_\_\_\_\_ 47-57 \_\_\_\_\_ Over 57 \_\_\_\_\_

*(Place an "X" on the appropriate lines)*

Email address:

---

Contact number:

---

Total years working as a principal: \_\_\_\_\_

Total years working as principal at current school:

---

Total years working in education:

---

### **Professional Experience**

1. For how long have you worked as an elementary school principal?
  
2. For how long did you serve as a teacher \_\_\_\_\_ and at what levels? Elementary \_\_\_\_\_, middle \_\_\_\_\_, or high \_\_\_\_\_ (include all that apply)
  
3. For how long did you serve as an assistant principal \_\_\_\_\_ and at what levels? Elementary \_\_\_\_\_, middle \_\_\_\_\_, or high \_\_\_\_\_ (include all that apply)
  
4. In what other positions have you served at the school-building level requiring you to monitor, supervise, evaluate, train, or support teachers? Please describe your role(s).
  
5. In what type of elementary schools have you worked? Circle any/all applicable responses below.
  - a. Rural
  - b. Suburban
  - c. Urban (to include Title I schools)

### **Alternative Teacher Preparation**

6. Are you familiar with alternative teacher preparation programs? If so, with which types of programs are you familiar?
  
  
  
  
  
7. How would you define alternative teacher preparation?



## APPENDIX E

### School of Educational Conceptual Framework Outcomes and Disposition Statements

#### **Key: Reflective Professional Model**

**CS**=Communication Skills   **HOT**=Higher Order Thinking Skills   **IT**=Instructional Media & Media   **LD**=Learning & Development   **SCD**=School, Culture, & Diversity,   **IDD**=Instructional Design & Delivery   **CM**=Classroom Management   **AE**=Assessment & Evaluation   **PD**=Professional Development

DISPOSITION	CS	HOT	IT	LD	SCD	IDD	CM	AE	PD
1. Attendance should be dependable, arrival and departure should be on time, and appearance and actions should be professional.									<b>X</b>
2. Subject matter to be taught should connect to the students' world.				<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>			
3. The content of teaching should align with state and professional standards.						<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>	
4. Organization and preparation are key to promoting students' active learning.				<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>			
5. Ideas should be	<b>X</b>			<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>			

expressed/communicated clearly and appropriately both verbally and in writing.									
<b>6.</b> Multiple teaching approaches and technology should be used with students.		<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>			
<b>7.</b> Classroom management should be student-centered, and students should be treated with respect and care.				<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>		
<b>8.</b> Students from diverse backgrounds deserve respect and understanding.	<b>X</b>				<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>		
<b>9.</b> Cooperation should be facilitated in the classroom and throughout the school and community.							<b>X</b>		
<b>10.</b> Students' progress should be tracked (monitored) with instructional adjustments made to meet their needs.						<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>	
<b>11.</b> Constructive criticism and suggestions should be encouraged and welcomed.						<b>X</b>			<b>X</b>
<b>12.</b> Enthusiasm and commitment are necessary to become an effective teacher.									<b>X</b>



**Indiana University Northwest**  
**School of Education**  
**OPTION II INITIAL PROGRAM**  
**Professional Teaching Dispositions**

**The Intern demonstrates these dispositions:**

1. Understands and demonstrates professionalism by regular attendance, punctuality, appearance, and conduct in relation to students, peers, parents, and administration.
2. Recognizes the importance of family and community and connects learning to the students' world.
3. Believes that all children and youth deserve a quality education and aligns instruction with state and professional standards.
4. Believes that an effective urban teacher is both organized and prepared and engages learners in the learning process, through multiple teaching approaches and technology.
5. Understands the power of both verbal and non-verbal communication and is particularly aware of the need to express ideas clearly, respectfully and appropriately.
6. Believes that there are multiple intelligences and employs diverse approaches and integrates technology in teaching and assessing urban students.
7. Understands that classroom management is more than discipline and focuses on teaching students' self-discipline and responsibility, while treating the students with respect and care.
8. Understands the importance of individual uniqueness and the implications of race, class and gender on learning and creates a learning environment that utilizes invitational and multicultural theories of practice.
9. Believes that learning potential is best invited forth in an atmosphere of cooperation and collaboration and facilitates a "cooperative spirit" in students by using cooperative learning strategies.
10. Understands the importance of assessment and monitors students' progress carefully, regularly and creatively, reporting that progress clearly and systematically, while making needed adjustments.
11. Understands the importance of professional development and welcomes constructive criticism and suggestions.

12. Believes that enthusiasm and commitment are necessary to become a “star” urban teacher and actualizes that commitment and enthusiasm in their interactions with students, parents and others in the community.

Indiana University Northwest School of Education, *Student/TL/Mentor ResourcesUTEP Forms*,  
Retrieved from <http://www.iun.edu/~utep/forms/index.shtml>

**Indiana University Northwest****School of Education****OPTION II INITIAL PROGRAM****Professional Teaching Dispositions Acceptance**

The Professional Teaching Dispositions adopted by the Indiana University Northwest School of Education and the UTEP Policy Board promote and support Intern development of professionalism as outlined in state and national standards. These standards are developed in the SOE Conceptual Framework, incorporated throughout the Initial Program, and are expressed with twelve disposition statements.

I have been informed on what the dispositions are, why UTEP adopted the dispositions, when assessment can and will take place, who assesses Interns' dispositions, and the process for assessing and evaluating Interns' dispositions.

My signature affirms that I received, understand, and agree to the Indiana University Northwest School of Education Professional Teaching Dispositions and evaluation process.

---

Name

---

Date

---

Course

Retrieved from Indiana University Northwest School of Education Faculty and Students  
Handbook, 2010 Indiana University Northwest School of Education, *Student/TL/Mentor*  
*Resources UTEP Forms*, Retrieved from <http://www.iun.edu/~utep/forms/index.shtml>

Intern Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

PHASE OF PREPARATION: \_\_\_\_ Early Experiences \_\_\_\_ Midway Experiences \_\_\_\_ Final Experiences

**TEACHER INSTRUCTOR/MENTOR FORM****OPTION II INITIAL PROGRAM**

Please rate the extent to which your UTEP Intern demonstrates or evidences value for each of the professional behaviors stated below. Circle the number that best represents, from lowest to highest, the amount of evidence the student demonstrates. Use the space below each behavior (or on the back) to make any comments about the student and that disposition. All 0 and 4 ratings must be supported with comments.

**EVIDENCE OF VALUE RATING****The Intern shows evidence of these dispositions:**

DEFICIENT EXEMPLARY

- |   |                           |
|---|---------------------------|
| 1. Understands and demonstrates professionalism by regular attendance, punctuality, appearance, and conduct in relation to students, peers, parents, and administration.                | 0.....1.....2.....3.....4 |
| 2. Recognizes the importance of family and community and connects learning to the students' world.  | 0.....1.....2.....3.....4 |
| 3. Believes that all children and youth deserve a quality education and aligns instruction with state and professional standards.   | 0.....1.....2.....3.....4 |
| 4. Believes that an effective urban teacher is both organized and prepared and engages learners in the learning process, through culturally relevant and culturally responsive lessons. | 0.....1.....2.....3.....4 |
| 5. Understands the power of both verbal and non-verbal communication and is particularly aware of the need to express ideas clearly, respectfully and appropriately.                    | 0.....1.....2.....3.....4 |
| 6. Believes that there are multiple intelligences and employs diverse approaches and integrates technology in teaching and assessing urban students.                                    | 0.....1.....2.....3.....4 |

- |   |                           |
|---|---------------------------|
| 7. Understands that classroom management is more than discipline and focuses on teaching students self-discipline and responsibility, while treating the students with respect and care.                                | 0.....1.....2.....3.....4 |
| 8. Understands the importance of individual uniqueness and the implications of race, class and gender on learning and creates a learning environment that utilizes invitational and multicultural theories of practice. | 0.....1.....2.....3.....4 |
| 9. Believes that learning potential is best invited forth in an atmosphere of cooperation and collaboration and facilitates a “cooperative spirit” in students by using cooperative learning strategies.                | 0.....1.....2.....3.....4 |
| 10. Understands the importance of assessment and monitors students’ progress carefully, regularly and creatively, reporting that progress clearly and systematically, while making needed adjustments.                  | 0.....1.....2.....3.....4 |
| 11. Understands the importance of professional development and welcomes constructive criticism and suggestions.   | 0.....1.....2.....3.....4 |
| 12. Believes that enthusiasm and commitment are necessary to become a “star” urban teacher and actualizes that commitment and enthusiasm in their interactions with students, parents and others in the community.      | 0.....1.....2.....3.....4 |

Indiana University Northwest School of Education, *Student/TL/Mentor Resources UTEP Forms*,  
Retrieved January 2011 from <http://www.iun.edu/~utep/forms/index.shtml>

Intern Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

PHASE OF PREPARATION: \_\_\_\_ Early Experiences \_\_\_\_ Midway Experiences \_\_\_\_ Final Experiences

## UTEP INTERN FORM

### OPTION II INITIAL PROGRAM

#### “Personal Assessment of Teaching Dispositions”

Please rate how much you value each of the professional dispositions and behaviors stated. Circle the number that best represents, from “Not Important” to “Very Important,” how much you value each disposition. Use the space below each behavior (or on the back) to make comments about that disposition. All 0 and 4 ratings must be supported with comments.

**I rate the value of these dispositions as:**

NOT IMPORTANT      VERY IMPORTANT

- |  |                           |
|--|---------------------------|
| 1. Understands and demonstrates professionalism by regular attendance, punctuality, appearance, and conduct in relation to students, peers, parents, and administration.                 | 0.....1.....2.....3.....4 |
| 2. Recognizes the importance of family and community and connects learning to the students' world.   | 0.....1.....2.....3.....4 |
| 3. Believes that all children and youth deserve a quality education and aligns instruction with state and professional standards.  | 0.....1.....2.....3.....4 |
| 4. Believes that an effective urban teacher is both organized and prepared and engages learners in the learning process, through culturally relevant and culturally responsive lessons.  | 0.....1.....2.....3.....4 |
| 5. Understands the power of both verbal and non-verbal communication and is particularly aware of the need to express ideas clearly, respectfully and appropriately.                     | 0.....1.....2.....3.....4 |
| 6. Believes that there are multiple intelligences and employs diverse approaches and integrates technology in teaching and assessing urban students.                                     | 0.....1.....2.....3.....4 |
| 7. Understands that classroom management is more than discipline and focuses on teaching students self-discipline and responsibility, while treating the students with respect and care. | 0.....1.....2.....3.....4 |

- |   |                           |
|---|---------------------------|
| 8. Understands the importance of individual uniqueness and the implications of race, class and gender on learning and creates a learning environment that utilizes invitational and multicultural theories of practice. | 0.....1.....2.....3.....4 |
| 9. Believes that learning potential is best invited forth in an atmosphere of cooperation and collaboration and facilitates a “cooperative spirit” in students by using cooperative learning strategies.                | 0.....1.....2.....3.....4 |
| 10. Understands the importance of assessment and monitors students’ progress carefully, regularly and creatively, reporting that progress clearly and systematically, while making needed adjustments.                  | 0.....1.....2.....3.....4 |
| 11. Understands the importance of professional development and welcomes constructive criticism and suggestions.   | 0.....1.....2.....3.....4 |
| 12. Believes that enthusiasm and commitment are necessary to become a “star” urban teacher and actualizes that commitment and enthusiasm in their interactions with students, parents and others in the community.      | 0.....1.....2.....3.....4 |

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STUDENT \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

PHASE OF PREPARATION: \_\_\_\_ Early Experiences \_\_\_\_ Midway Experiences \_\_\_\_ Final Experiences

**IUN STUDENT FORM****OPTION II INITIAL PROGRAM****“Personal Reflection: Validating Dispositions for Teaching”**

<b>Disposition</b>	<i>How I demonstrate this disposition:</i>	<i>How I could develop this disposition more:</i>
<b>Understands Professionalism</b>		
<b>Recognizes family &amp; community are important</b>		
<b>Believes all children deserve a quality education</b>		
<b>Believes effective teachers are organized and prepared</b>		
<b>Understands the power of verbal and non-verbal communication</b>		
<b>Believes that there are multiple intelligences.</b>		

<b>Understands that classroom management is more than discipline</b>		
<b>Understands the importance of individual uniqueness</b>		
<b>Believes that a cooperative and collaborative atmosphere is best for learning</b>		
<b>Understands the importance of assessment and monitoring student progress</b>		
<b>Understands the importance of professional development</b>		
<b>Believes that enthusiasm and commitment are necessary</b>		